

The
OAKMAN SCHOOL
Turners Falls, Massachusetts



Ed Gregory

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Historical accounts gleaned from The **Turners Falls Reporter** (1872-1922)
as well as from **Greenfield** newspapers. * *e.g.*

*Source: [Old Fulton New York Post Cards \(fultonhistory.com\)](http://fultonhistory.com)

-  Entry dates are linked to the **PDF** that will access the newspaper article.
-  Notes by *e.g.* unless otherwise labeled.
-  **Photo on page 47 is a 'cut'** from the Greenfield Newspapers in the research site. It will be reproduced here as a poor third-generation copy. (see pictorial print).

Ed Gregory
3.26.23 & 12.28.23

Oakman School directory

Turners Falls Reporter

April 16, 1873	Oakman School House	1	June 11	Special Examination	12
“ “	127 Little Rogues	1	July 25	Desks in Rubbish	12
April 23	Oakman School Name	1	Aug. 29	High School Exam.	12
Aug. 27	School Dedication	1	Oct. 24	Glee Club	13
Sept. 3	Schools Begin	3	May 22, 1895	Ten Graduates	13
Sept. 29	School House Burned	3	“ “	Beat Greenfield	13
Oct. 8	Town Meeting	3	May 29	Alumni Dinner	13
Oct. 15	Schoolhouse Debris	3	“ “	Drawing & Industrial	13
June 24, 1874	Finish Schoolhouse	4	May 31	Parent Visit	13
September 8, 1877	No Water	4	“ “	Ten Graduate	13
January 9, 1878	Cold Oakman	4	June 12	Teachers Decline	13
Feb. 6	Schools Close	4	Aug. 7	Paint Building	14
Feb. 27	Exams	4	Oct. 9	New Piano	14
July 1, 1885	Well Digging	4	Oct. 16	Teacher's Dinner	14
May 5, 1886	Arbor Day	4	September 29, 1873	Fire Destruction	14
June 16	Schools Close	4	March 2, 1874	Re-Build Oakman	14
July 21	Repair & Reorganize	5	Aug. 31	First Bell	14
Nov. 10	New Instructors	5	Dec. 21	Oakman Possession	15
“ “	The High School	5	September 3, 1877	Grass Grounds	15
Dec. 8	New Teacher	6	November 29, 1880	Schools Close	15
June 8, 1887	Schools Close	6	July 19, 1886	Reorganization	15
February 15, 1888	School Grounds	6	September 12, 1891	Special Town Meeting	15
June 13	No Graduates	7	June 8, 1895	Graduation Exercises	15
Aug. 29	Fire Escape	7	December 11, 1901	Oakman Defeated	16
March 19, 1890	New Rooms	7	April 23, 1904	Baseball	17
June 11	Flag Presentation	8	June 10, 1905	Oakman Principle	17
Nov. 5	School \$ Appropriations	8	August 4, 1906	Manual Training	17
September 9, 1891	Lot Graded	8	November 17, 1906	Experiment Working	18
March 9, 1892	Lot Fenced	8	July 7	Fourth of July	18
March 23	New Sessions	8	March 23, 1912	School Interests	18
May 25	Grounds Improvement	8	September 13, 1913	Teachers Change	19
June 22	Graduation Exercises	8	Oct. 15	Evening School	19
Sept. 14	Horizontal Bar	9	“ “	Playground Apparatus	19
Oct. 26	Columbus Day	9	February 25, 1914	Iron Posts	19
January 25, 1893	Teacher's Meeting	11	June 10	Janitors	19
June 7	Graduate Dance	11	June 13	Janitors	20
Sept. 27	Teacher's Meeting	11	June 9, 1920	Teachers Appointed	20
February 14, 1894	Gymnasium	11	Nov. 24	Evening School	20
Feb. 21	Piano Fund	11	January 5, 1921	Health Seals	20
March 21	Gymnasium Equipped	11	Aug. 12	Teachers Appointed	20
April 11	Class Honors	12	Aug. 15	Minor Repairs	21
April 25	Hose Team	12	Nov. 23	Evening School	21
May 30	Baseball with Bernardston	12	July 11, 1922	Building Repairs	21
“ “	Graduate 9 + 1	12	Aug. 31	Extra 7 th Grade	22
June 6	Baseball Victory	12	January 3, 1923	Evening School	22
			Jan. 20	“Christmas Carol”	22
			March 31	Automobile School	22

June 12	Teachers Appointed	22	February 26, 1934	Oppose High School	44
Aug. 28	New Teachers	23	March 3	Taxpayer's Leader	44
Oct. 11	Fire Drill	23	December 26, 1945	Lot to Electric Co.	45
Oct. 27	Evening School	23	March 11, 1946	School Interest Released	46
Nov. 27	Superintendent Gift	23	February 16, 1947	Razing the Building	46
January 6, 1924	New Teachers	24	June 4, 1954	Excellent Schools	46
April 2	Honor Roll	24	“ “	Oakman in 1895	46
April 3	School Problems	24	June 7, 1955	Oakman Keystone	48
May 28	Honor Roll	25	June 16	Rededication	48
June 18	New School Flurry	25	June 23, 1981	School Remembered	48
Sept. 21	1500 Pupils	28	June 27, 1989	The Way We Were	49
Oct. 2	Evening School	28			
Oct. 10	Third Floor Condemned	29	Pictorial	50	
Dec. 10	Honor Roll	30	Biographical Sketches	55	
March 14, 1925	Night School Graduation	31	Codicil	69	
June 4	Civil Service Exam.	32			
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July 22	Perfect Attendance	40			
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March 10	Plans Committee	42			
March 13	Disposal Favored	43			
April 21	Torn Down	43			
May 1	Town Work	44			
June 2	Razed	44			



Oakman School 1895

Praeteriti temporis non est obliviscendum

Times past must not be forgotten *e.g.* 3.22.22



Oakman School

April 16, 1873

-The Oakman School House, on the hill, is being finished up, and furniture for two rooms has been ordered.

-If any of our readers doubt the necessity for more schoolrooms, we invite them to visit Miss Marsh's room, where they will find 127 little rogues, all as attentive as they can be. It was a pretty sight, but its continuance for any length of time would be an imposition upon both teacher and pupils. As it is, Miss Marsh is struggling to do her best for all, and declines to send any away. Two or three weeks will remedy it, and the Oakman School will be ready for the reception of classes. So we are told.

April 23

Letter From Hon. R.N. Oakman

Editors Reporter:

In your last paper you speak of the "Oakman School House." Now, my name is a very "humble" one, as Uriah Heep would say, but still I cannot allow you to use it quite so freely. As to having the new school-house at Turners Falls burdened with my name, there are good and sufficient reasons why no such thing should be attempted.

1st. It is an ill omen to name a child before it is fairly born

2nd. You may very properly be asked to show by what authority you presume to act so conspicuous a part of the christening.

3rd. I have no money in the house more than any other tax-payer in town, and that is a sufficient reason in itself why my name should not attach to the school.

But after all you may only jesting, then let me ask you not to jest with my name. It is the best and most sacredly guarded possession I have. Please make the proper "correction" in your next issue, and joke with me anywhere but with mu unpretending nature.

Yours always, R. N. Oakman.

Mr. Oakman labors under more than one mistake in the foregoing. He says "there are good and sufficient reasons why no such thing should be attempted," but fails to give a single one. His first reason, that it is premature is faulty from the fact that cities, towns, public buildings, churches, and in fact any and all public works are named as soon as located. We waited for ours to be finished. His second reason, is equally faulty, for we had nothing more to do with the "christening" than to rejoice at the selection of the Board of School Committee in their unanimous choice. If this is "presumption" we have learned something. Thirdly, he says he has no more "money" in the building than any other tax-payer, and that that is a "sufficient reason in itself." This last is the lamest of all excuses. In fact, absurd. Were it a matter of dollars and cents, we fear we might find all our schools without a "habitation or a name."

It was not for the money he did, could or would give that we chose to connect his name with the only real educational institution of our section of the town; on the other hand; it was because that name was his "best and most sacredly guarded possession" that we desired to connect it with that which is the public's best and most sacredly guarded

possession; in recognition of a quarter of a century's services as a member, *the* member, of our school committee, and as one whose whole life of toil and triumph might well be used as an incentive to earnest application among scholars. Mr. Oakman is master of the situation, however, and may forbid its use, but not without causing regret among those who desired to see his name connected with the school. It was no jest on our part, but, as we believe, an honest, unbought compliment to an honest man, and we fail to see the logic of "humility" that will prevent its retaining its designation.

August 27

Dedication of the Oakman School House

The services of dedication at the Oakman School house on Monday afternoon were the most interesting our people have yet enjoyed. The following is the programme,[sic] than which no finer has ever been presented to our people.

Voluntary oration, Messers. Crocker and Thompson; Prayer, Rev. L.P. Frost; Song and Chorus—"Come back to New England,"—Mrs. W.H.P. Gilmore, assisted by Mrs. C.A. Miner, Sumner Chapman and Frank R. Bowman; Address, Hon. R.N. Oakman. Duett[sic]—"O'er the Dale,"—Mrs. Miner and Mrs. Gilmore; Presentation of a gold watch to Miss Ella M. Marsh, Addington D. Welch; Reply in behalf of Miss March, Rev. L.P. Frost; Instrumental music—"Departed Days,"—Messrs. Crocker and Thompson; Address, Rev. J.H. Waterbury; Doxology¹. By the audience; Benediction, Rev. J.H. Waterbury.

A letter from Rev. Father Quaille was read, expressing his regrets at an absence compelled by parochial duties.

Mr. Oakman carried off the palm, as usual. He was all himself, and there's enough of him for half a dozen. He was funny, sarcastic, complimentary, fault-finding, and in short, indulged in all moods and tenses of an old fogey school master, especially the subjective mood, past and present tense.

"Gentlemen of the School Committee: On behalf of the Building Committee, I now give over to your care and custody this house, reserving the right to carry to completion some parts not yet perfected. The town voted the sum of \$14,500, to be appropriated to building and furnishing the house, the committee would be most happy to change for the better. The brick were[sic] not well sorted, the walls were not well anchored, the cupola was not well planned, the site was not well chosen to exhibit the best proportions of the building, and there are some other things in the construction and finish, with which the committee would find fault if it would repair the defect.

We, however, tender to you gentlemen, as agents of the town, this house, and we claim for it that it is well adapted for the purpose intended. We have easy, spacious and convenient entry -ways and halls, providing abundant and easy egress in case of fire or accident. We have four large, well lighted and ventilated, comfortable and convenient well furnished school rooms, with a seating capacity for sixty scholars in each room, or two hundred and forty in the whole. We claim that there are no school rooms in this town, if the country, that will excel them in light, comfortable and convenience. We have in

¹ In Christian religious services, a hymn, prayer, or formula of worship in praise of God.

addition, this hall, which speaks for itself, intended for a general assembly of all the scholars, and exercise in composition, in oratory and histrionic performances. Nothing whatever, inside or out, has been allowed in the nature of ornament. It has been the aim of the committee to build a plain, substantial and commodious house, with everything for utility and nothing for display. For myself, I may be allowed to say that I am utterly opposed to add to the burdens of the taxation by drafts upon the public treasury for architectural display in our public buildings. Thus gentlemen, we give you the keys of this house charging you to guard well and faithfully the public trust."

Sept. 3

The public schools begin next Monday. There will be three schools in the Oakman house and one in the old house. The school in the old house will be for the smallest children. The other will be graded as nearly as that feat can be accomplished among children who are so nearly of one age. Parents are requested to send all their children who are to be pupils to the Oakman schoolhouse next Monday morning to be assigned to their proper rooms.

Sept. 29 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1873-1875 - 0157.pdf](#) (from the [Greenfield Gazette and Courier](#))

The Oakman School-house, which was completed and dedicated two or three weeks since, was destroyed by fire between 11 and 12 o'clock, on Wednesday night, it was a fine brick building and with the furniture cost \$18,000, The fire took from a defective flue. There was no insurance. The schools will be greatly retarded by the fire. There are 400 scholars in the village, while not over 60 can be otherwise accommodated. The village has no fire engine, although a steamer has been ordered and is daily expected.

Oct. 8

Town Meeting

The Town Meeting on Saturday was every way satisfactory to those who desire to see the Oakman School-house rebuilt. On motion of A.D. Welch, it was voted to raise and appropriate \$14,000. This sum, in addition to what will be saved from the wreck of the old house, will replace every thing.[sic] Messers. R.N. Oakman, Alpheus Moore and George O. Peabody were appointed a building committee. It was also voted to raise \$1,400 for a school-house in the South District, as it is known. The superintendence of its erection was referred to the committee on the Oakman school-house. The location is to be decided by a vote of the taxpayers of the district. The Selectmen were requested to summon a jury to inquire into the cause of the late fire, and we believe that the first meeting will be held today.

Oct. 15

-Messers. John J. Emery and George P. Dunbar, with a gang of workmen, commenced clearing away the debris of the Oakman schoolhouse on Saturday last. They expect to complete their work in one week from to-day.

June 24, 1874

The building committee are daring to finish the Oakman Schoolhouse.

Sept. 5, 1877

Something should be done about getting a supply of water at the Oakman school house. The children are obliged to go to the neighboring houses for drinking water.

January 9, 1878

The pupils of the Oakman school house complain of the cold. The furnace being too small for the rooms this cold winter.

Feb. 6

The schools of Montague close as follows: Millers Falls, Feb. 7th forenoon; Montague City, Feb. 7th, afternoon; Turners Falls, old school house, 8th, forenoon; Oakman schools, 8th, afternoon; Oakman Grammar, 22nd, afternoon; Chestnut Hill, 14th, p.m.; Federal Street, 15th, a.m.; West, 15th, p.m.; Centre, 22nd, p.m.; Dry Hill, 21st, p.m.

Feb. 27

The examination of the Oakman Grammar School, last Friday afternoon, was a gratifying success, and, notwithstanding the storm, twenty-five visitors took interest enough to attend. The committee spoke in complimentary terms of the good work of the teacher and the attentiveness of the pupils, and by invitation, Mrs. G.L. Rist made a neat little speech to the school. Mr. Brown is the best teacher that has taught in Turners Falls, and it is to be hoped that he will be retained.

July 1, 1885

Somebody is digging a well in the middle of K Street, opposite the Oakman school house. A correspondent wants to know how much the town will have to pay if school children tumble down the hole, some day, and get killed.

May 5, 1886

Arbor Day was observed by C. S. Davis, principal of the Oakman school, Rev. T. A. Batson and Russell Pease by planting trees around the Oakman and Central street schoolhouses. The expense of the trees will probably be covered by a sum which was left by a former village improvement society. Let the good work continue.

June 16

The schools of Turners Falls will close this week as follows: Those in the G Street building on Thursday morning; Second Street school, on Thursday noon; those in the Central Street building on Thursday afternoon; Eight Street, Friday morning, and those in

the Oakman building on Friday afternoon. The schools in the other parts of town will close next week.

July 21

The School Committee of Montague are about to repair and re-organize the high school at Turners Falls. An assistant has already been engaged, and the upper rooms in the Oakman school-house, which had been used for two schools, previous to building the Eighth-Street house will be fitted up for recitation-rooms, library and rooms for supplies, and a laboratory.

Nov. 10

Prof. E. A. Tower of North Adams, has begun to give instructions in music, Thursdays, to the schools in the Oakman and the Eighth Street buildings, spending one half-hour in each school. As this is only an experiment, there will soon be an opportunity given the public to see and hear what has been accomplished, and for the purpose of getting the public opinion in the matter.

The High School

As will be remembered, the matter of raising the grade of the Oakman high school has been agitated for some time in our midst. Last spring Principal C. S. Davis urged the matter upon the School Committee again, even proposing to try and raise a part of the necessary funds, by giving an entertainment, or holding a fair with the schools, in order to bear as light as possible on the school appropriations, as there was no provision made in them for this purpose.

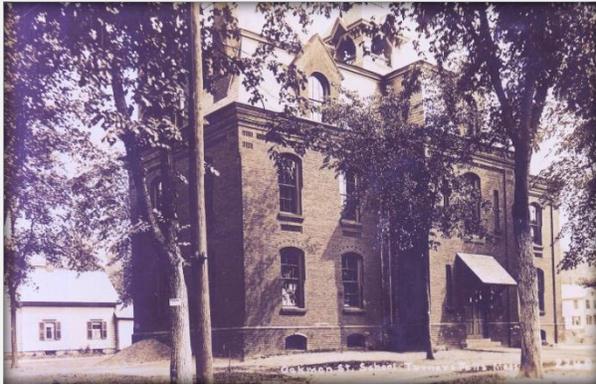
Accordingly, the wish was granted, and the most necessary requisites procured. Now Mr. Davis is making arrangements for a fair which will be held in the near future. The proceeds of this fair will be used in furnishing the school with necessaries used in the higher branches of study, as natural philosophy, music, etc. Mr. Davis is also publishing a paper which will soon be distributed free, and which has been very liberally supported by the merchants and business men of the village. If successful Mr. Davis will enlarge the teacher's library, the foundation of which was recently laid by the purchase of quite a number of books, with a fund of \$25, which our former principal, Mr. Hall raised from a public entertainment with the schools.

It has been truthfully said that "the high school is the poor man's college," and, as there are between 40 and 50 scholars attending the Oakman high school at present, it would seem that we should try and make the most of it, it being for the interest of the whole community. There is no doubt that our enterprising principal will receive the hearty support which he deserves.

Dec. 8

Miss Annie C. Merritt, who has taught the seventh grade school at the Oakman building for the past term, has resigned to take a more lucrative position elsewhere. Miss Nora Taft of Brattleboro, Vt., succeeds her here. Miss Taft is a Normal school graduate, and comes highly recommended.

June 8, 1887



Oakman school. (8th St.)

e.g. archive

Schools will close next week as follows:—On Wednesday afternoon, June 15th, those at South End, L Street and Central Street buildings. On Thursday morning, June 16th, those at Eighth Street, also those at Millers Falls and Federal Street. On Thursday afternoon, those at Center High School building. On Friday

morning, those at Montague City and Oakman building, except the Oakman High School, which will probably have graduation exercises on Friday evening. The schools on Dry Hill and Chestnut Hill will close one week later than the rest.

February 15, 1888

Enclosing the Oakman School Grounds.

Mr. Editor—The necessity of some kind of enclosure around the Oakman school yard will be apparent to any one[sic] who will give the matter a moment's consideration. Now, teams cross the lot continually in all directions, probably on account of an erroneous supposition that there is an accepted highway across the rear of the lot. It is only due to lucky accident that no one has been hurt.

Probably no one will question the advisability of supplying the Oakman building with city water, for it is a well known fact that the present water supply cannot be depended upon in dry weather. Besides the almost constant use of water in a chemical laboratory and the advantages of modern sinks and closets make the question of water supply an important one.

A visit to the Second Street school property will doubtless convince any one that there is ample room for improvement there.

In the first place the building is in the rear of the lot, with barns and outhouses on three sides, while the front of the lot is a side hill unfit for a play ground[sic] in its present

condition. The out building belonging to the school we find a considerable distance away, in a southerly direction, on some private party's land, liable to be ordered off at any time.

There is no cellar under the building and no suitable place to store fuel. The remedy in this case would seem to be, to build a cellar wall and underpinning in line with other buildings on Second street and then move the school house into it. The cellar or basement would make a store room for fuel, etc. This building should also be supplied with city water. The earth taken from the cellar could be used in grading the lot, thus giving more room for a play ground.

In this connection it may be well to mention that the Central Street school lot should also be graded so as to do away with the pools which now form there in wet weather. This will necessitate the building of a foot or two of mason work around the cellar windows, and then filling, so as to form a regular incline from the building to the street.

These suggestions are made in order to bring the matter before the public and it would be well if those who have better plans to offer would make them known.

L. J. March

June 13

Another year has been added to the course of the Oakman High school, consequently, no pupils will graduate from that school this year.

Aug. 29

The school committee have been ordered to put fire escapes on the Oakman school building.

March 19, 1890

In a week or two when the new school-house is completely furnished, the several schools will take new rooms as follows:

Central Street School-house

Down stairs, Miss Wyman, Miss Batson.

Up stairs, Miss Lynde, Miss Shea.

Eighth Street School

Down stairs, Miss Hartley, Miss Pease.

Up stairs, Miss Smith, Miss Garfield.

New Eighth St. School-house

Down stairs, Miss Ingram, Miss McSheehy.

Up stairs, Miss Austin, Miss Rogers.

Oakman Schoolhouse

High school and Mr. Phillips.

June 11

Presentation of the Flag to the Schools

Manton E. Taft Post G.A.R., announced to the school committee and the citizens that one of their members had purchased an American flag which he desired presented to the schools of this village in the name of the Post, and wished a time set apart for its formal reception. Arrangements were made and the transfer of the patriotic emblem was done at the Oakman school building yesterday afternoon a four o'clock.

Nov. 5

Special Town Meeting

Joseph F. Bartlett was elected Moderator. The following articles were acted upon:

Art. 2. *Voted* that the sum of \$1500 be appropriated to pay balance due for heating, ventilation and sanitary arrangements in 8th St. school building, Oakman school building and Millers Falls school house.

September 9, 1891

Art. 4 - *Voted* - To grade the Oakman School house lot at a cost of \$250.

March 9, 1892

29th. *Voted* \$250 for fencing and grading the Oakman School lot.

Mar. 23

Beginning March 28, the opening of the spring term, the Oakman school will have only one session a day instead of two, as formerly, from 8 o'clock a.m. to 1 o'clock p.m.

May 25

Wednesday and Thursday of last week were spent by the boys of the Oakman school building, both High and Grammar schools, in grading and seeding down the grounds around that school house. The young ladies of the building supplied the money for seed and fertilizer which were provided by Mr. F. I. Webster at cost price.

June 22

The graduating exercises of the class of '92, consisting of seven young ladies of the Oakman High school, were held in Patucket Hall on Thursday evening, June 16. A reception was held in the hall the next evening.

Sept. 14

A horizontal bar has been placed in the yard of the Oakman school for the amusement of the boys.

Oct. 26

Columbus Day

The Columbus Day celebration in this village, on Friday, was a surprise to many who did not believe that Turners Falls had enough energy inside its borders to get up any celebration of such excellence. But in this they were happily disappointed, and the parade and floats, and in fact all the exercises of the day reflected credit on those who carried them out.

The exercises of the day commenced at 10.30 a.m., when all the schools assembled in their rooms, and a flag was raised above each school building by a detail of the G.A.R. The children saluted the flag and three cheers were given for "old glory," and "America" and other patriotic songs were sung.

About 1 o'clock there was a general movement to Central Park, where further exercises were to be held. It began to run just at that time, and it looked as though the spirit of Columbus would have to forego his celebration. Providence was kind, however, and the rain soon ceased.

After all the schools and those who were to participate in the parade had assembled at the park, exercises were begun at 1.30. They consisted of the reading of the President's proclamation, the acknowledgement of God, singing by the schools of "America," address by Joseph Griswold, Esq., an address by Roy Brown of the Oakman High school, and the ode by Miff Harrington of the Center High school. After the exercises were concluded, the line of march was formed which went down L street, up Second, down Avenue A, and around Prospect Street to the park, where it was disbanded.

A platoon of police and Chief Marshall, R. L. Atherton, with two aids mounted, headed the procession, which was followed by the Millers Falls band, the officers of the town, the Manton E. Taft Post, G.A.R., a whole army of children, in order of their grades, marshaled by their teachers.

Armstrong Post, G.A.R. of Montague Center, St. Mary's Drum Corps, St. Mary's Temperance Society, St. Jean Baptiste Society, Bohemian Society, Gustav Adolph Lodge, the fire department, Citizens and Bicycle Club.

The school from Montague in a large barge, brought up the rear. There were five emblematic floats, all of which were good. The first one represented the Santa Maria, with Columbus on board with a telescope, bound on his voyage of discovery. In it there were sailors, courtiers, priests and various officers. They all seemed to look pretty cheerful for such a mutinous crew. Columbus was represented by Harry Adams. "Columbus before the

court of Spain" after his return from America, was another float, and Putnam Severance made a great Columbus in more senses than one. Columbus's great discovery seemed to have elated him so that whereas on his voyage his hair was white, on his return it had grown brown.

The King and Queen of Spain was well portrayed by Dr. Nims and Mrs. Albert Smith. Another float represented a home scene, and Montague furnished one, representing the interior of Washington's home. But the best one was the float emblematical of the "Union," which was composed of forty-four girls dressed in white with blue caps and sashes on, each with name of a state in red. Miss Ella Crocker as the goddess of liberty, was draped with flags and sat high above them.

The hose cart of the Fire Department, and the Shamrock Hose Company's cart, were both handsomely decorated with flags and bunting.

There were thirty-five bicycle riders in the procession, including two ladies. One little fellow on a boy's wheel lead them, and his little legs grew very tired before he got through. The wheels were all gaily decorated with the national colors of America, Spain and Italy, which were twined in and about the spokes in various designs, some of which were very original.

There were more than a hundred citizens in line, all carrying canes tied with red, white and blue ribbons.

Some of the houses, and several; businesses were decorated with flags and draped with bunting, and the red, white and blue were prominent everywhere.

The parade was well worth seeing, and compared favorably with that in larger and more pretentious towns. It amply proved that some good could come out of Nazareth, when the Nazarenes desired it.

One of the striking features of the Columbus Day celebration was the game of ball between the fat men and the lean men, with Messrs. Russell and Coy as umpires. What these latter gentlemen did not know of the game has not yet been written.

Play began at 4 o'clock, the fat men leading off. They succeeded usually in dodging the ball, and batted well; sometimes sending the whirling sphere a distance of fully ten feet. Collins was the happy possessor of a bat as broad as his own genial face, and as shapely as the sole of a number 13 Waukenplast² shoe. But alas! At one fell blow he shivered it into splinters. In the attendant excitement one fat man stole home and the first run was scored, although the pace was not a dizzying one.

The leans failed to score in their first inning on account of the fine playing of Rist at third base. Whenever he saw a fly coming, he held up his hands and said "paws," and the ball stayed with him. In the second inning the leans got in a run, and from this point the

² A perfectly cut boot: Low common-sense heel; medium heavy, pliable sole; street-wear.

game was very close and even, but not monotonous. If the umpires roasted one side, they took the earliest opportunity of turning the other side to the fire.

Our own State Senator, J. F. Bartlett, was disabled in the fifth inning and had to get someone to run for him, but promises it shall not happen in November. Farnsworth and Nims deserve special mention for their frantic efforts and zealous intentions; but the ball was always a foul and Riley didn't have his gun, and the doctor had no pull on it.

Game was called at the end of the sixth inning, as the darkness prevented the umpires from distinguishing between fat and lean; the score standing 6 to 6. About 1000 people witnessed the exciting game.

January 25, 1893

The monthly meeting of the teachers of the public schools of this town will be held on the afternoon of Friday, Jan. 17, at the Oakman building. Miss Senda Berenson, from the Smith College Gymnasium, will be present, and will give some instruction in the Ling System³ of gymnastics.

June 7

A reception, with dancing, will be given in honor of the graduates by the Oakman High school, this evening.

Sept. 27

The teachers of the public schools of the town will meet at the Oakman School Building, Turners Falls, on Friday afternoon at 2.30 o'clock.

February 14, 1894

The Oakman High school contemplates starting a gymnasium in the school building.

Feb. 21

Members of the Oakman High school give an entertainment at the school this evening, the proceeds go to the piano fund.

March 21

The gymnasium which is located in the Oakman High school building, is now well equipped with all necessary appliances, and the members of the High school have not been slow to take advantage of it.

³ Gymnastic exercises without apparatus.

April 11

These class honors have been award to the members of the graduating class of the Oakman High school:

Valedictorian - Effie L. Chapman Salutatorian - Flora L. Hosmer

Class Poet - Leal M. Fales Class Prophet - Pearl F. Haskins Class Historian - Perry N. Hall

Apr. 18

The Oakman High school hose team will run against a picked team to-morrow at 1.30 p.m. sharp, from Farren House to Gunn's Block.

April 25

The Oakman High school hose team won the hose race against a picked team which was run Thursday afternoon from the Farren House to Gunn's Block.

(picked team not mentioned *e.g.*)

May 30

-The Oakman High school nine went to Bernardston, yesterday, and played a game of ball with the Powers Institute. The Oakman nine won.

-A class of nine and one special student will be graduated from the Oakman High school on the evening of June 6, at Patucket Hall.

June 6

The Oakman High school nine played a game of ball with the nine from Powers Institute, Bernardston, on Goddard's grounds, Monday. The score stood 12 to 9 in favor of the Oakman nine.

July 11

It has been decided by the school committee that pupils who failed to pass the High school examinations, last month, and all new applicants for admission to the High school shall present themselves for special examination at the Oakman school building on Monday afternoon, Sept. 3d, at 2 o'clock. This examination will be conducted by the Principal[sic] and will be upon work of last year.

July 25

The school committee is fixing up a room for the second assistant High school teacher at the Oakman school house, and making other repairs. In cleaning out the cellar nearly 100 good desks were found in the rubbish.

Aug. 29

Pupils for examination for entrance to the high school must present themselves at the Oakman building, at 2.30 o'clock on Monday afternoon, Sept. 3.

Oct. 24

The young ladies of the Oakman High school have formed a Glee Club, and concerts will be given during the winter. The following officers were elected:

President- Miss Katherine Fales Vice President - Miss Mary Moreau
Secretary - Miss Nellie Fitzgerald Treasurer - Miss Rose Batson

May 22, 1895

-A class of ten will be graduated from the Oakman High school this year. The graduating exercises will take place at Colle's opera house on Thursday evening, June 6. A reception will be tendered in Patucket Hall, on Friday evening, June 7. There will be dancing.

-The Oakman High school team won a game of base ball[sic] played with the High school at Greenfield, last Friday, the score being 28 to 5.

May 29

The annual alumni dinner of the Oakman High school will be held after the graduating exercises, at the Farren House, on Thursday evening, June 6.

The honors of the graduating class at the Oakman High school have been announced:

Valedictorian - Miss Nellie P. Fitzgerald
Salutatorian - Miss Rosina A. Batson
Historian - Miss Agnes C. O'Brien
Prophet - Miss Harriet J. Howard
Poet - Miss Anna B. McNally

-The annual exhibition of public school drawing and industrial work will occur on May 31 and June 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Oakman High school hall. The exhibition is free to the public and parents and friends are earnestly urged to be present.

-A class of ten will be graduated from the Oakman High school on Thursday evening, June 6. These are the names of the graduates: Nellie P. Fitzgerald, Rosina A. Batson, Mary E. Moreau, Bridgit A. Crimmins, Annie B. McNally, Agnes C. O'Brien, Harriet J. Howard, Michael S. O'Leary, William T. Powers, Louis E. Barnard.

June 12

Some Teachers Reappointed

The School Committee has about completed the list of reappointment of teachers. The following teachers have declined reappointment: Miss Elizabeth H. Smith, teach of drawing; Miss Jenny T. Atherton, 1st assistant at the Oakman High school and Miss Edith M. Dugan, assistant at the Montague High school; Mrs. C.P. Phillips has been transferred

from the Eighth grade at Oakman High school and Miss Florence Rockwell has been engaged as assistant at the Montague High school.

Aug. 7

J. F. Bartlett has been awarded the contract for painting the Central Street and Oakman High school houses, and also one of the Eighth Street buildings, while Wood & Dunbar have received the contract to paint the Montague City, South End and Eighth Street buildings.

Oct. 9

The Oakman High school has purchased a new upright Trowbridge piano for the use of the school.

Oct. 16

Many contributions have already been received by the pupils and teachers of the Oakman High school for the dinner they will serve at the teacher's convention to be held here on Friday, Oct. 25.

Greenfield Gazette and Courier

The Greenfield newspaper offered additional information

That was not available in the [Turners Falls Reporter](#).

September 29, 1873

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1873-1875 - 0157.pdf](#)

The Oakman School-house, which was completed and dedicated two or three weeks since, was destroyed by fire between 11 and 12 o'clock, on Wednesday night, it was a fine brick building and with the furniture cost \$18,000, The fire took from a defective flue. There was no insurance. The schools will be greatly retarded by the fire. There are 400 scholars in the village, while not over 60 can be otherwise accommodated. The village has no fire engine, although a steamer has been ordered and is daily expected.

March 2, 1874

[Turners Falls](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1873-1875 - 0245.pdf](#)

The contract for re-building the Oakman school house has been awarded to Alphonse Moore and R.B. Campbell Mr. Moore does the wood work and Mr. Campbell the masonry—guaranty[sic] that it will be well done.

Aug. 31

[Turners Falls](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1873-1875 - 0349.pdf](#)

The first bell put upon any public building has been hung on the Oakman school house.

Dec. 21

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1873-1875 - 0413.pdf](#)

R. N. Oakman, chairman of the building committee of the Oakman School House, formally gave the school committee possession of the building, Tuesday afternoon.

September 3, 1877

[Turners Falls](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1876 - 0355.pdf](#)

The grounds about the Oakman school-house have been neatly graded and sowed down to grass.

November 29, 1880

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1879-1881 - 0409.pdf](#)

[Turners Falls](#)

The four upper schools in the Oakman closed Friday, 19th. Although there was no special examination a number of visitors were present. In the higher department the pupils presented the principal, Mr. Brown, a fine stereoscope, and a number of views as a token of their esteem and love. This is Mr. Brown's fifth year as Principal of the Oakman school, and he has in every way thoroughly filled his position

July 19, 1886

[Turners Falls](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1885-1887 - 0640.pdf](#)

The school committee propose to repair and reorganize the High school at Turners Falls. An assistant has already been engaged, and the upper rooms in the Oakman school house, which had been used for two schools previous to building the Eighth street school house, will be fitted up for recitation rooms, library and rooms for supplies, and a laboratory.

Sept. 12, 1891

[Montague](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1891-1893 - 0298.pdf](#)

[Special Town Meeting](#)

Two hundred and fifty dollars were appropriated to grade the Oakman school grounds.

June 8, 1895

[Oakman School Graduation](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1894-1896 - 0648.pdf](#)

The graduation exercises of the Oakman high school filled the Opera house to its utmost capacity Thursday evening, and were of unusual interest.

The graduates are Louis Edward Barnard, Rosina Amanda Batson, Bridgie Agnes Crimmins, Nellie Patricia Fitzgerald, Harriet Jane Howard, Annie Bernardine McNally,

May Elizabeth Moreau, Agnes Catherine O'Brien, Michael Stephen O'Leary, and William Thomas Powers.

After the invocation, by Rev. John Clark, the school sang "Fairylend Waltz" with much spirit. Miss Batson gave the salutatory, using the class motto, "Pas comoten, mais comme bien." and treating it very brightly. A good debate on athletics was given by Michael S. O'Leary and William T. Powers. Miss McNally contributed the class poem, which was unusually meritorious. After a good recitation of "Toussaint L'Ouverture" by Louis Barnard, Miss O'Brien gave a very clever class history, entering into the mental as well as physical capacities of the class.

The school sang "Anchored," and Miss Crimmins gave a fine recitation of Schiller's "Der Taucher." The class prophecy was by Miss Howard. "The Brook," was effectively recited by Miss Moreau, aided by the singing of nine young ladies of the school.

Following this a scene from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar was finely presented, Miss McNally and Miss Fitzgerald taking the leading parts, Brutus and Antony, and the class representing the citizens. Miss Crocker sang "Come to me." Miss Fitzgerald delivered the valedictory in a very pleasing manner. The class song, written by Miss McNally, was sung, and the exercises closed with the presentation of diplomas by Rev. Alfred Free.

Greenfield Recorder Gazette

December 11, 1901

[Oakman Team Defeated but Played Well](#) [Greenfield MA Reporter 1900-1901 - 0937.pdf](#)

The Oakman high school basketball team played its first game at Montague, Friday night, and was defeated by a score of 48 to 6. Though the score was a large one, the game was the game was most interesting than might be expected. The Montagues' scoring was all done in the first half for at the beginning of the second half the score was 42-to 6.

In the second half the Turners Falls boys played fine ball and held the home team down to two goals, Lowe and Emery each shot a difficult goal, the first half, making the only score Timmers Falls won.

Pollock at guard in the second half was too much for Bergen and kept him so busy that he had no time to shoot gals. The line-up:

Montague High	Oakman High
Brown, lf	rf, Lowe
Ross, rf	lf, Emery
Hamilton, rg	lg, __
Alden, lg	rg, Dolan or Pollock
Clapp, c	c, Polk or Dolan

Pollock changed places with Dolan at the half.

Referee, Taggart. Time 20-minute halves.

March 19, 1902

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 5194.pdf](#)

The senior class of the Oakman school is rehearsing a play which it present in the near future.

April 23, 1904

Baseball

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1904-1905 - 0164.pdf](#)

Oakman 11, Orange 7. Orange High school was defeated by Oakman High of Turners Falls in the opening game of the season on the Butterfield lot, Tuesday morning.

The contest was very even but full of costly errors, Orange High being most conspicuous in this respect, as well as in bad judgment and slow fielding.

Five of the eight hits made by Oakman school should have been, easy outs. Both batteries, Sherwin and Merriam for Orange High, and Emery and McCue for Oakman, did excellent work.

The score by innings: Innings,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Oakman HS	0 1 3 2 1 2 0 0 2—11
Orange HS	1 0 1 1 0 1 0 2 1—7

Left on bases, Orange 6, Oakman 5. Two-base hits, Gilman, Donohoe.

Three-base hits, Sumner Sacrifice hits, French.

Double play, Smith to Horton. Struck out, by Sherwin 9, by Emery 10.

Wild pitch, Sherwin Passed balls, Merriam 1, McCue 1.

Stolen bases, Orange 7, Oakman 4.

Umpire, Balcom. Time, 1h 20m. Attendance 800.

The Greenfield Recorder

June 10, 1905

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1904-1905 - 0779.pdf](#)

School Board has Appointed Principals for Several Different Buildings.

Only Oakman School is given here. *e.g.*

Oakman School; Miss Nellie Fitzgerald.

August 4, 1906

Manual Training at Turners

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 3257.pdf](#)

The Montague school committee has taken an important step in voting to introduce manual training. They accept a proposition from the American Manual Training school for the introduction of their work, to be tried first in the Oakman building in the eighth grades.

There will be bench work for the boys with tools, and sewing for the girls. The American Manual Training school is to open 10 model schools in the state and the one at Turners Falls will be one of these. A supervisor will be sent around to superintend the work as carried on by the teachers and pupils.

November 17, 1906

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 3423.pdf](#)

Experiment Working Well—Does Away with Expense of Supervisor.

Much interest is felt at Turners Falls in the experiment at manual training that is being tried with the eighth grade pupils of the Oakman school building. Thirty-eight boys and nearly as many girls are taking the course, and they like the work. This course is arranged by contract with the American Manual Training school, and this school at Turners Falls is one of 10 model schools in the state to which the American Manual Training school sends school authorities and others that wish to see the system in operation.

The pupils and teachers follow printed instructions that are sent with the material, and the work is supervised by the teachers of the schools. Thus the system is supposed to be peculiarly adapted to such towns as do not desire to hire a special teacher for manual training. The American Manual Training school will send a supervisor to look over the work as often as is desired. The regular price is \$10 for each pupil for the year, but by special arrangement with the school committee of Montague, a concession is made in this case so as to get the model school established there. If the experiment is successful a considerably more extended course may be adopted by the committee.

The boys have already made match strikers and calendars, cutting them out of bass wood furnished with the rest of the material. Later they will make other articles of household use. The girls began at sewing on buttons, and now are making aprons in miniature. Soon they will make a practical outfit for cooking with cap and aprons. There was before this practically no manual training in the Montague schools.

July 7, 1909

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 8661.pdf](#)

The Fourth Had Also Its Outbreak of Mischief.

There was not much doing here, the night before the Fourth the authorities Keeping things pretty quiet. Sunday night after midnight, however, things began to hum and there was no mistaking the fact that the boys were out. No serious damage to property or persons is reported. Some of the boys broke into the Oakman school and rang the bell. Box 42 of the fire alarm system was pulled in by some one looking for trouble and one special officer was chased into the house,

March 23, 1912

School and Town Interests

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1912-1913 - 0114.pdf](#)

One of the most practical things done by the boys last year was the refinishing of their desks at the Oakman school. The interest and zeal displayed in this phase, of manual training was indicative of the desire to be doing something practical and partaking of the

dignity attached to maw's work. As one High school boy said last year when assigned the task of constructing a work-bench, "Why, this is a man's work."

The Montague High school principal says: "The vocational courses, shop-work and domestic science greatly need extension.

September 13, 1913

[Other Turners Falls News](#)

[Greenfield MA Gazette 1912-1913 - 0972.pdf](#)

Miss Mary Donovan, teacher of the eighth grade in the Oakman school, has resigned her position and will teach near Boston. Miss Margaret Sweeney of Suffield, Ct., will take her place.

Oct. 15

[Evening School Opens Monday](#)

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1912-1913 - 0933.pdf](#)

-Evening school will open next Monday evening and it will be held in the Oakman building on the corner of School and K streets. It will be held three nights a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays with a competent corps of teachers. In the past there has always been a good attendance at the evening school sessions and as the law is strict in regard to proper schooling the attendance will be fully as large if not larger than any previous year.

-The board of trade has voted to loan the play ground[sic] apparatus purchased last year to the school committee for use on the school grounds. One piece is to be put at the Central street school and the other at the Oakman school. The apparatus was purchased and installed on the vacant lot on K street last year and was used by many of the children but for want of a proper place was not used the past summer. They will no doubt get plenty of usage from now on.

February 25, 1914

[Town Meeting on Monday](#)

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1914-1915 - 0077.pdf](#)

Numerous articles are listed. We'll see only the Oakman content. *e.g.*

Another article calls for the placing of iron posts along each side of the Oakman School yard to prevent teams from trespassing on the school grounds. As it is at present the teams instead of going around K st. go right through the school yard and it is a dangerous practice[sic] when all of the children are out to play and it is a wonder no one has been injured.

June 10

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1914-1915 a - 0247.pdf](#)

TURNERS FALLS—The school committee at a meeting held last week reappointed most of the janitors of the school buildings throughout the town. John J. Ryan of G street

was appointed janitor of the Central street, Eighth street and Oakman school buildings in place of A. J. Crean, who has held that position for several years.

June 13

[Other Turners Falls News](#) [Greenfield MA Gazette 1914-1915 - 0264.pdf](#)

The school committee have appointed the following janitors for the ensuing year: Jos. Guilbault, Turners Falls High school; John J. Ryan. Central street and Oakman school; Daniel Shanahan at south End school buildings.

June 9, 1920

[School Board Held Meeting; Appointments](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1920 - 1072.pdf](#)

Oakman building—Mrs. Catherine Daly, principal. VIII; M. Ethel Ryan, VIII; Grace C. Kelleher. VII; Marguerite M. Murphy, VII.

Nov. 24

[Public School Notes](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1920 - 2336.pdf](#)

[Oakman School only.](#) *e.g.*

Evening schools to learn to speak, read and write English will open in the Oakman building Monday evening, November 29, beginning at 7 o'clock. The attendance of all who are interested is urged for the opening night.

January 5, 1921

[Seal Sale Was Great Success](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1921 - 0025.pdf](#)

The result of the sale of health seals was very gratifying and the official workers wish to extend thanks to the public for their generosity. The pupils of the Oakman school under the direction of Miss Kelleher collected \$74.36. The captains of the leading teams were Ruth Blassberg, Eileen Bourdeau and John Horrigan.

Aug. 12

[School Teachers are Appointed](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1921 - 1819.pdf](#)

[Only the Oakman School will be given.](#) *e.g.*

Oakman School Mrs. Katherine Daly, principal, grade 8; M. Ethel Ryan, grade 8; Anna R. Daley, grade. 7; Rose E. Shanahan, grade 7; Grace Kelleher, grade 6.

Aug. 15

Schools Undergo Minor Repairs

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1921 - 1835.pdf](#)

Oakman—Plaster repairing; new steps to third floor and extension of railing to third floor; repainting of woodwork.

Nov. 23

Registration for Evening School

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1921 - 2633.pdf](#)

Will be Held Neat Monday Night at Oakman School

Registration for evening school here will be held next Monday night at the Oakman school building. Superintendent of Schools James Quinn is hopeful that many will take advantage of this opportunity.

In making the announcement regarding registration the school head also outlined the general idea behind the evening school plan. He made clear the difference between the two general classes of students which comprise the school.

One class is devoted primarily to the teaching of English. This class is attended by those foreigners who are desirous of becoming acquainted with English. The study of the language monopolizes practically the entire time of this class. Then there is the other class which the superintendent feels will prove popular. All adults who feel that there is some branch of study in which they know that they would be interested in studying should register.

Nothing definite has been made public regarding this second class because it will not be a single class but will be broken up into a number of groups each pursuing some particular study in which they are especially interested.

In the large cities these classes in various languages, history, stenography, typewriting, manual training, mechanical drawing, etc., have large attendances. Men and women, some of them high school graduates, feel that they are not equipped as they should be for their work and go to night school.

At the registration Monday night those who sign will be asked what study they wish to take. In this way the school authorities will obtain an idea of what is wanted by the people here who intend to attend night school. Later an announcement will be made of the courses which will be offered.

July 11, 1922

Turners Falls

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1922 - 1396.pdf](#)

The repairs of the school buildings are being made at this time and the Oakman building in particular is being somewhat remodelled.[sic] On account of the crowded condition of this building it has been decided to partition off a room on the third floor for an extra seventh grade.

Aug. 31

[School Notes](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1922 - 1800.pdf](#)

[Oakman School only](#) *e.g.*

Miss Ruth Parsons of Easthampton, will have charge of the extra seventh grade which will be opened in the Oakman building. The Oakman building has been entirely renovated throughout and is now in first class condition. The third floor of this building has been remodeled and an extra room provided for.

January 3, 1923

[Turners Falls](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 0017.pdf](#)

The evening school will open this evening at the Oakman building at seven o'clock. This branch of the local school system is doing a very praiseworthy work and the school has been exceptionally well attended in the past few years. The results obtained are most gratifying and thoroughly appreciated by those attending the sessions.

Jan. 20

[Turners Falls](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 0163.pdf](#)

Miss Ryan's class in the Oakman building dramatized with great success part of Dickens' "Christmas Carol" at the school yesterday. The principal characters were: D. Kelleher, E. Wyman, M. Cassidy and Chester Porter. Others taking part were M. Rubin, J. Puhala, R. Reynolds, F. Paris, A. Flagg, W. Welch, R. Jillson and S. Wojtaswicz. Several of the parents of the scholars were present and the entertainment was fully appreciated.

March 31

[Auto School Monday](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 0717.pdf](#)

The automobile school which will be established here by the State University Extension under the auspices of Community Service will open on Monday evening at the Oakman building. It was at first announced that this school would open on Tuesday evening but it was found necessary to change the date of this first meeting. Although the class is large enough to guarantee the success of the undertaking there is still room for about five more members. Any man or woman desiring to enter for this course may do so at the meeting Monday evening.

June 12

[Many Teachers are Reappointed](#) [Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 1341.pdf](#)

[School Committee Announces List of Those Who Will Remain](#)

[Only the Oakman School will be given.](#) *e.g.*

Oakman Building: Ethel Ryan, Rose Shanahan and Grace Maley.

Aug. 28

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 1951.pdf](#)

New Teachers

The extra seventh grade in the Oakman building will be in charge of Miss Jessie Baldwin, a graduate of Fitchburg Normal, and who has taught for several years in Athol. Miss Rose Shanahan will teach history in the seventh and eighth grades., here, Miss Mary Reddy of Warren, Mass., has been engaged to teach the first grade in Millers Falls. Miss Reddy is a graduate of the Fitchburg Normal. Miss Edith Kelso, who has been teaching, in Montgomery, and who is a graduate of the Westfield Normal will have the third grade in Millers Falls and Miss Ileene Powers, who has been teaching in New Jersey and who is a graduate of the Fitchburg Normal, will be in charge of the fifth grade.

Oct. 11

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 2321.pdf](#)

Fire Drill Tests Show All Grades Are Proficient

At the Oakman building, which contains five rooms, composed of one sixth, two seventh and two eighth grades, the time elapsing between the-ringing of the alarm and the time when the building had been vacated was one minute, and forty seconds.

Only a very few of the children were frightened and none of them caused the slightest trouble. As they left the building each grade formed in a line at certain points on the school yards. Had the teachers or scholars been prepared for the test the time would not be so remarkable but with no warning and with the various classes going about their work as usual it was a most unusual demonstration.

Oct. 27

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 2449.pdf](#)

Evening School

The evening schools will open next Monday night at the Oakman building at 7 o'clock. The sessions, which will be two hours long, will be held on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and Thursday evening of each week.

Nov. 27

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 2532.pdf](#)

Turners Falls

The A-class pupils of the eighth grade school in the Oakman building, Mrs. Daly, teacher, presented the retiring superintendent of schools, James J. Quinn, with a five dollar gold piece as a token of their esteem and affection. Mr. Quinn was much surprised and touched by this gift.

January 6, 1924

Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 0299.pdf

[New Teacher Here](#)

"Miss Edith Lee of Amherst has been engaged to teach in the portable building in place of Miss Maude Hill, who has been transferred to the Oakman building in the place of Miss Grace Malay, resigned.

April 2

Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 0744.pdf

[Honor Roll of Grade Schools](#)

[Pupils Who Stand High in Studies During Last Term](#)

The following pupils in the grade schools achieved places on the honor roll by their work last term:

Grade 7A, Oakman building. (Four subjects) Daniel Abercrombie, Gladys Brostowaka, Clarence Flagg, Lucille Grogan, Albert Hastaba, Daniel Leary, William Porter, Eveline Rosewarne, John Schuhle, Josephine Sekwozec, Mary Short, Harold Shuman, Bernard Treml, Helen Vassar, Elizabeth Wheeler, Frances Starbuck (Three Subjects): Albert Koch.

Grade 7B, Oakman building. (Four subjects) Edna Rogers, Katherine Beauregard, (Three subjects): Nina Baker, Joseph Reipold, Helena Prondecki.

Grade 7C, (Three subjects): Adrien Lemoine.

Grade 8A, Oakman building (Four subjects): Eileen Kelley, Albert Krainson, William McClintock, Warren Thomas, Edward Togneri; (Three subjects): Marion Fish, Theresa Pauly, Josephine Wojtasiecwich, Edwin Grogan, Irving Gartrell, Joseph Martin, Hoyt Wakefield.

8 B, (Three subjects): Randolph Moltenbrey, Mary Holewa, Rudolf Novak.

April 3

Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 0753.pdf

[Supt. Keating Spoke to Club](#)

[Rotarians Heard Problems of School System Described](#)

A lengthy article that has little information in regard to the Oakman building. It will be eliminated from this account. e.g.

In the Wednesday edition of the Recorder, the report of the talk given by Superintendent of Schools Joseph S. Keating was in error in tenement, stating that the fire hazard at the Old Eighth building was a matter of grave concern. The building to which reference was made was the Oakman building, which as most citizens know, has been the subject of much discussion for some time . . .

. . . In regard to the Oakman building, Mr. Keating stated that the fire hazard at this building was one of serious concern and that something should be done immediately to remedy this situation. He said that if the citizens would inspect this building personally, he

felt sure that no man or woman would care to assume the responsibility of permitting this building to be used as it is at present. Two of the rooms in this building are now being used by permission of the state, but it is doubtful if the town will be allowed to use them much longer.

Next year there will be three eighth grades in this building instead of two and three seventh grades. Another portable building will have to be provided next year unless something is done to remedy this condition. To adopt the portable building idea is not only expensive in the extreme, but it is poor economy and most unsatisfactory.

May 28

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 1232.pdf](#)

[Oakman School Honor Roll](#)

The honor roll for the Oakman building is as follows: Grade 8-B: Irving Gartrell, William McClintock, Mary Holewa;

Grade 7-A: Gladys Brostowska, Albert Hastaba, Albert Koch, Daniel Leary, William Porter, Evelyn Rosewame, Mary Short, Bernard Trenl, Elisabeth Wheeler, Francis Starbuck, John Schuhle, Lucille Grogan, James Humphrey, Isabel Kuklewicz, Paul Cadran.

Grade 7-B: Edna Rogers, Misa Baker, Robina Wishart.

Grade 7-C: Everette Shepardson.

June 18

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 1395.pdf](#)

[Current Comment](#)

The recent flurry over the building of the new school house in Montague Centre, brings to mind that 20 years ago the town of Montague was all agog and in a terrific turmoil over the sites and the building of the two finest public structures in Turners Falls—the Carnegie library and the Turners Falls high school, both of which buildings are now the pride of every citizen.

The history of these two institutions is full of interest and residents of the town in 1904 still recall, mostly with grins, the excitement and the numerous meetings held before all the momentous questions were amicably decided. And they appear to have been decided wisely and well, after all, for nobody now questions that both the library and the high school, work on each of which was begun in 1904, are located in the most desirable sites, and one is inclined to wonder, 20 years after, why there was so much commotion over the matter.

The original vote to build a new high school the Oakman building having been outgrown, was passed at a meeting held on September 22, 1903, and \$50,000 was appropriated for the purpose. The building committee, Joseph F. Bartlett, Daniel F. Daly, Frank Gerald, Charles M. Burnett, all of Turners Falls, and Rev. Dorr A. Hudson of

Millers Falls, were instructed to secure “the Bluff site beyond the residence of C. M. Burnett on High street,” if possible.

This building committee had previously recommended the site on Crocker avenue which was finally selected and which the school building now adorns, but there was strenuous objection to this site. At that time there was not a single building in the rear of High street and what is now the most desirable residential section of Turners Falls, was but an uncharted wilderness.

A great hue and cry arose over putting a \$50,000 building—a tremendous price in those days, “out in the woods.” Numerous sites were proposed, the Bluff site on Montague street, beyond Mr. Burnett's house, now occupied by Karl F. Miller, and which territory is still little built up; a lot on Ninth street between K street and the avenue, and several others. At every town meeting citizen argued eloquently and at length for and against the different sites. Very few had sufficient vision to favor the Crocker avenue location. Most voters thought it too far out of the way and pictured the hardships and sufferings of the pupils in walking out to the plains to get the higher education.

One of the objections voiced was that the building would be “way back out of sight, inaccessible, not centered, and where it could add nothing to the attraction of the village.”

The library project was being discussed at the same time and the Turners Falls Company generously offered a large tract, free, on the “Bluff site,” on condition that both the new high school and the library be erected there. The town accepted the lot for the high school building but rejected it as a site for the library, whereupon the Turners Falls Company withdrew its proposition and offered to donate five acres “in the rear of land of Porter Farwell on High street” instead.

The arguments and meetings continued, and on February 3, 1904, the building committee were instructed by the voters to “buy such part of tract of land lying south of Ninth street, between K street and Avenue A, as may be necessary for the site for the new high school building.” After passing this vote which was simply a repudiation of the work and judgment of the building committee and the previous instructions of the town, three members of the building committee, Messrs. Burnett, Bartlett and Hudson, immediately resigned, but appeared later to have reconsidered.

Mr. Burnett as chairman of the committee, consistently fought for the present site. He repeatedly expressed his belief in the growth of the town and urged the selection of the Crocker avenue location. He was a man of few words, but his faith in Crocker avenue as the correct location for the \$50,000 school was so strong that he overcame his natural reserve and in open town meeting, advocated the measure. To his persistence and vision, more than to any other one man, the town owes the selection of the present site, and his wisdom has been amply justified.

At length, at a town meeting held March 14, 1904, it was voted to “accept the lot situated on Crocker avenue as a gift on which to build the high school, and the selectmen and committee, hereto fore appointed are instructed to proceed to construct the new school.”

So, the question was settled at last and at a meeting held July 21, it was voted to issue bonds on notes for \$50,000, payable \$5000 each year for 10 years, to 1914, to pay for the building.

E. C. and G. C. Gardner of Springfield were the architects and Thomas Brothers were the contractors. The work began in the summer of 1904, and that date appears in Roman numerals on the front of the building, but the first gathering in the new high school was not held till June 6, 1905, when a declamation contest was held by the three lower classes of the school.

The first graduation exercises in the new building were held on June 29, 1905. The class of 1905 was composed of only four members: Miss Rosetta E. Bankwitz, Miss Alice Connolly of Riverside, Walter H. Ray, Jr., and Michael J. Welch. Miss Connolly was valedictorian and Walter Ray gave the salutatory. State Superintendent of Education of Vermont, Hon. Walter E. Rantage, spoke on this occasion on “The Social Problem of the Individual.”

This first class to have the honor of graduating from the beautiful new building, presented a handsome sculptured frieze, three sections of the Cantoria, or Singing Boys, by Dells Robbia, which still adorns the wall over the platform in the assembly hall.

As we have said, the library and the high school were twin problems of the same year, 1904. There was just as much discussion and difference of opinion about where to build the library as there was about the school. The sites suggested were the “Bluff site,” beyond High street, which was at first favored for the high school, the present site, and the T. D. Murphy lot on the corner of Seventh and Prospect streets, where the Episcopal church now is. The latter site was the most favored, probably, but the price was considered too high, and finally, after much agony and oratory, the Avenue A location was selected, and \$4000 was appropriated for the purchase of the lot from the Turners Falls company, at a meeting held January 5, 1904.

The High Street site had met with particularly stern opposition, some voters contending that the library if built there would become moss grown, Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate, who had begun, about this time, his policy of giving libraries to certain communities, had offered the town of Montague the sum of \$12,500 for a library building, subject to the condition that \$1250 be appropriated yearly for maintenance and that a suitable site be provided. This offer was secured through the efforts of the late W. H. P. Gilmore of Turners Falls, who had been much interested in the public library since the earliest days. The library at this time was located in cramped leased quarters in Hibernian

hall and a suitable building to house the growing collection of books certainly was badly needed.

The library building committee was composed of W. H. P. Gilmore, C. M. Burnett and Charles W. Schuler. Mr. Burnett declined to serve and Norman P. Farwell was elected in his stead. The architects were Messrs. McLean and Wright of Boston and Thomas Brothers, the local contractors, were the builders. Three thousand dollars more was voted to finish and furnish the library, but it was not occupied until early in January, 1906.

In 1904 there were only 1401 registered male voters in the town, 967 of this number being in the Turners Falls precinct, and there were only 21 females registered, who had the privilege of voting for school committee.

Sept. 21

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 2906.pdf](#)

Number 1500 Pupils, 3 Percent More Than Last Year.

The Oakman building, which has been a subject of much discussion among the citizens, and which is regarded as unsafe by the school authorities of both the town and state, is being still further taxed for room this fall

There are 27 more pupils in this building today than a year, ago, a condition which many citizens regard with grave concern. The fault, however, does not lie with the school committee, who have pointed out repeatedly the danger which surrounds the pupils hi this building. Adequate school accommodations, it is felt, should be provided, for the pupils of Turners Falls.

Oct. 2

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 1513.pdf](#)

Evening School

The school department of the town, which has been conducting classes in English and citizenship for foreign born adults each year, will open the evening schools this year as usual. The first session to he held here will take place on Monday evening, October 6, and win be held in the Oakman building. There will be another school opened in Millers Falls, the first session to be held on Monday, October 13, in the Highland school building in Millers Falls.

Classes will be held in the. Oakman building on each Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 o'clock and the same schedule will apply to the Millers Falls district.

These classes are free to all citizens of the town and the opportunity should be grasped by all those desiring to learn the English language. Citizens will be assisted in preparing themselves to take oat their naturalization papers. Among some of the important reasons why these classes should be well attended are the following:

English is the language of the country; English is the language of the children; it will help one, to do his work well: it will help one to keep out of danger; it will help parents to control and advise their children; it does away with the need of an interpreter; it will assist one to understand the laws of the country and it will help one to be a good American citizen. Full information in regard to the evening schools may be had by inquiring at the office of the superintendent of schools at the high school building.

Oct. 10

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 1589.pdf](#)

Third Floor School Rooms Condemned

School Committee Orders Platoon System at Oakman Building

The school committee of the town of Montague decided at their last meeting to take steps to eliminate the danger of using the third floor of the Oakman school building for class-room purposes and as a result, the platoon system⁴ will be instituted in this building beginning next Tuesday morning.

While this system is far from being satisfactory, it is considered to be the best method to circumvent the congested conditions which have caused so much uneasiness and worry on the part of the school board and many of the citizens.

The school authorities have for several years recommended additional accommodations here in Turners Falls and have repeatedly pointed out the risk which was being run in over-crowding the buildings. Several years ago, the third floor of the Oakman building was remodeled to make additional rooms and while the arrangement was approved by the state authorities, it was understood that the adaptation was to be only temporary.

Through necessity, the board was obliged to greatly exceed the privileges permitted by the state until the conditions surrounding this building became such as to cause a feeling of more or less alarm.

The matter was brought to a focus when Arthur F. Roach, state building inspector of the department of public safety, made an inspection of the building with the result that Superintendent of Schools Joseph S. Keating was notified by Mr. Roach that immediate changes were imperative. Mr. Roach says in part.

“This department offers strenuous objection against use of class rooms on the third floor of the Oakman school, so called, in Turners Falls. The objections are based upon:

- "1. Inadequate lighting.
- "2. No ventilating system.

⁴ “Platooning,” is a 100 year old term for “a method of school organization in which a teacher instructs in one subject or in one group of related subjects,” (Barnes 1962) also known as “departmentalization”, “specialization” and “distributed teaching model” and the antithesis of “self-contained classrooms.” Wikipedia.

"3. Fire escape exits for pupils from third floor, through windows, with possible obstructions of ice and snow.

"4. General disapproval of class rooms on third floor of any building, unless same is provided with up to date enclosed stairway towers.

"5. Danger to pupils from fire drills—using fire escapes.

"6. Still greater danger to "life and limb" from actual fire in this building.

"We refuse to accept responsibility for what might happen from continued use of these class rooms, and will require that arrangements be made for discontinuing such use of them.

"We trust this may, and will be accomplished without necessity for further action from this department,"

In accordance with this advise,[sic] which practically constitutes an order, the school board have authorized the platoon system for the building. Four classes will be in session in the morning from 8 to 12.20 and three in the afternoon—from 12.30 to 4.50.

The morning groups will consist of the A and B divisions of the seventh and eighth grades and the afternoon groups will be composed of the B division of the sixth grade and the C divisions of the seventh and eighth grades.

Dec. 10

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1924 - 2074.pdf](#)

School Honor Roll

The honor roll for the pupils in the Oakman building have been given out and are as follows: Grade 7A. four subjects; Helen Balchunas, Thomas Broderick, Zelda Cotton, Lloyd Garrand, Alice Gunn, Charles Hillman, Edward Miller, Josephine Siwizki, Josephine Tuminski and Lillian Ungrich; three subjects, Gladys Corbiere, Margaret Crean, Bernard Relihan, Catherine Kulda, Mary Zmuda, Lloyd Starbuck and Elmer pierce.

Grade 7B, four subjects; Margaret Jillson, Roleen Winch and frank Albrycht; three subjects; Mildred Paris.

Grade 8A. four subjects; Albert Koch, Daniel Leary, William Porter, John Schuhle, Josephine Sekwazec, Mary Short, Bernard Treml, Francis Starbuck and Elizabeth Wheeler; three subjects; Gladys Brastawski, Lucille Grogan, Evelyn Rosewarne, Harold Shuman and Helen Vassar.

Grade 8B. four subjects, Francis Young, Kenneth Moltenbrey, Nina Baker, Robina Wishart and Louis Bush; three subjects; Regina Gessing, Edward Conway, Joseph Myleck, Mary Pietraszek, Helena Prondecki and Esther Clarke.

Night School has Graduation Night

52 Students Receive Diplomas from Superintendent Keating

An unusually interesting event took place at the Oakman school building on Thursday night, when a class of 52 students of the Turners Falls night school received their diplomas from the hands of Superintendent of Schools Joseph S. Keating.

For several years, the town of Montague has conducted these classes but the course this year was far more successful than any heretofore held, due to the keen and sustained interest which every member of the course displayed toward the work. The earnestness and zeal with which each individual took up the work was a splendid tribute to their courage and desire to improve their education and take their place among tin citizens of their adopted country.

The course was in charge of Mrs. Frances Foley, Miss Edith M. Lee and Miss Esther M. Richardson and provided instruction for those who could neither read, write, nor speak English, for Those who could speak a little English and desired to take out naturalization papers and also at advanced course.

With very few exceptions, all students who enrolled for the school in the fall have continued through to the end. The progress made has been little short of marvellous[sic] and especially is this true in the case of the pupils who could not speak a word of English. As a result of last year's course, every student who enrolled and completed the work has taken out their first papers.

At the exercises, each student took part and demonstrated in no uncertain manner the value of the course.

Mr. Keating gave an excellent talk at the time of presenting the certificates and John T. Quinn, a member of the school committee, also addressed the students and congratulated the students for taking advantage of the opportunities offered to them in the night schools.

The members of the class are as follows:

Beginners: Anthony Annes, Mrs. Mary Apola, Mrs. Frances Brostowska, Mrs. Katherine Cygan, Albert Paduske, Peter Samoraiski, Peter Sokolowski, Mrs. Katie Soveck, Frank Watroba, Blanche Duszkewicz, Josephine Kliszka, Perry Kowal, Anna Zak, Frank Zak, John Watroba.

Intermediate class: Mrs. Frank Bakula, Mrs. Manda Dlugosz, Mary Buszkiewicz, Michael Golowaka, George Kicinieck, Joseph Kijak, Adam Kosiewicz, Joseph Kurtyka, John Kuyensiek, John Nogai, Mrs. Anna Sojka, Joseph Sojka, Mrs. Catherine Waryan, Frank Waryan, Frank Zajak, Paul Zukowski, Mr. Catherine Zmuda.

Advanced class: Stanley Banash, Siegmund Blasberg, Mrs. Carrie Bugai, Mrs. Sophie Duda, Ignace Himileski, Peter Noga, Mrs. Antonia Sojka, Mrs. M. Stryszko,

Martin Yarmac, Joseph Zak, Leon Piecuch, Stanley Krol, Adrien Lemoine, Napoleon Verrier, Veronica Zajac, Victoria Rozecki, Jennie Rozecki, John Rozecki, Stephen Rozecki.

June 4

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 1248.pdf](#)

Turners Falls

A civil service examination for the position of clerk-carrier at the local post office will be held at the Oakman school building on next Saturday morning at 8.45 o'clock. Up to the present time, eight persons have signified their intention of taking the examination.

June 10

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 1297.pdf](#)

Children Write Fine Papers on New School Need

A short time ago the new school building committee and the superintendent of schools announced that a contest among the pupils in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades would take place for prizes on the best essay on "Why We Need a New Building."

The interest aroused among the children was keen and it was a common sight to see the boys and girls studying the plans of the proposed new building which were on exhibition in the Crocker Institution for Savings windows. Each pupil in these grades wrote their essays and the best five from each room was selected by their teacher. These essays were then rewritten by the children and the two best selected and handed over to Superintendent of Schools Keating and Miss Ayer and Miss Hunt, who went over them carefully and chose the five best essays from this group of sixteen.

The winners were as follows: 1st prize, Mary Pietrasek, \$5; 2nd prize, William Porter. \$3; third prize, Alice Gunn, \$2; fourth prize, Louis Hahn. \$1; fifth prize, Bernice Dolan, \$1.

All of the papers submitted were of particular interest and the viewpoint of the children in regard to the needs of a new building are of value to the citizens. Miss Pietrasek's essay was as follows:

"Voters, stop, look and listen! The time to give us our new school building is rapidly approaching. Follow the safe path, and I am sure you will never regret it.

"What do you consider the greatest asset of a town? Is it not education? It must be, for without education what could we do? It is the duty of the town then to maintain a high standard of education, not only for those who will attend high school, but also for those whose education will end in the grammar grades. A new building will help us do this.

"We have been-working for some for time greatly handicapped. Everyone knows the condition of the Oakman building. Of course, it really contains six rooms, but only four are fit for use as class rooms. The state has forbidden the use of the other two. At the beginning of the year, there were seven classes to attend school in four rooms. This would be the platoon system—certain classes attending morning sessions, and others afternoon

sessions. We, who have practically completed a year under this system, hope that no other classes will have to follow such a system. It is extremely hard, particularly for those attending the afternoon session.

“In the winter they have to remain in school long after dark. In the spring they have to remain during the hottest part of the day. The inconvenience of two pupils using the same desk is very great, for our desks are none too large for one. I could go on at great length to tell you the faults of the platoon system, but it would be merely a waste of time, for parents as well as children know how unpleasant it is. A new building will not only relieve this situation, but will also remedy the crowded condition of the high school. At the present time every available bit of space is being used in the high school. Do you realize that rooms which were never intended as recitation, or study rooms, are being used as such the domestic science room has several duties to perform; the library is used almost entirely for recitations. This makes it difficult to accomplish what is expected and to maintain the high standard which our high school has had and which we want it to continue to have.

“Who can deny that the Oakman building has served its purpose? And, who can deny that it is far from modern? It was built fifty years ago, when ideas regarding the height of; school buildings, the placing of windows and of school sanitation were quite different from what they are today. Our town ought never to have allowed children to attend school in the rooms on the third floor. If mothers and fathers really knew how great was the danger from fire in these rooms they would have breathed a sigh of relief when school ended. Our town was fortunate that no disaster occurred, and we pupils feel that we ought to give a vote of thanks to our janitor, who used so much care and gave so much attention to the stoves placed in the back of the rooms.

“Fortunately, however, these rooms are closed now. Yet the remaining rooms are far from modern. The windows are so arranged that the light does not strike the blackboards properly. The eyestrain caused as a result might prove a real menace to the pupils’ eyes.

“I might discuss at length the many faults of the building. Instead, I ask everyone who doubts to come and see for himself.

“It seems to me that the reasons which I have enumerated are sufficient to prove ‘why we need a new school building’. I hope no one will dare to suggest a portable building as a remedy. Money spent on a portable building is a sheer waste of public money, for we need permanent structures. Do not offer a renovated building. Though I am not an architect or contractor, I dare to say that no amount of remodeling could make this building, just as we need it for an up-to-date Junior High school. If you want us to have and maintain a high standard of education in the Town of Montague, give us the facilities and we promise to do the rest.

“Few realize how much more is expected of us today than of the children fifty years ago. Do you stop to think of the changes in history and geography or the rapid, strides made by the sciences. When we leave high school, we must compete in colleges with students from the largest cities in our country. Let us have an equal chance with them by giving us the right start. Finally, let us hope that no public-minded citizen will object to this building under the pretext of increased taxation. Can anyone say that our town is financially unable to provide us with a new school? If the Oakman building has given service for fifty years, it is not unreasonable to say that our new building will serve for at least twenty-five years. It is wrong, then, to argue that it will be a great financial burden, for there will be a considerable length of time in which to "pay it. Even though our taxes might have to be increased, do we not repay the town by giving it educated, highly trained, efficient men and women?

“Now that you have stopped, looked and listened, is it not safe for you to go on—to go on and vote for our new building?”

June 11

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 1308.pdf](#)

Third Prize Essay

The third prize essay in the contest which was conducted by the members of the new school building committee, in which the pupils of the sixth, seventh and eighth grades took part, was won by Alice Gunn, a pupil in class A of the 7th grade, and was as follows:

“At present there is much discussion in town about whether or not a new school building is needed. The children cannot decide this question. It is up to the voters of the town. But the children want to give you their side of the question, and as I am one of the pupils of the Oakman building, I will try to do this.

“Our greatest grievance is lack of room, caused by the state's condemning for use, the third floor of the Oakman building. This makes necessary the platoon system of school attendance, which, briefly means a division of the school into two half-day sessions? This is too hard for children of our age. High school boys and girls can stand it more easily. But they have at least one study school period a day, which rests them, while we have none during a four and one-half hour session. They also have two recesses, and we have but one.

“There is the very important matter of sanitary conditions. First the room ventilators are not at all satisfactory. When one division of pupils goes out of school, another is waiting at the door to come in. Windows can be put up for a few minutes only because of a draft. Ventilation in winter, especially, is hard, because then the windows cannot be opened sufficiently after the morning session, and the afternoon division has to do its work under the handicap of impure air.

“Secondly, the toilet conditions are inadequate, and on damp, cold days, abominable. For fifty-six girls, only four toilets are provided, so that frequently pupils have to spend the greater part of the recess time inside, rather than out of doors.

“The lighting system is also poor. The fixtures being close to the ceiling, do not give sufficient light on our desks. This causes eye strain, which in winter is greater, on account of the dark days. To me it has meant more headaches and absence from school than many other years.

“Another drawback due to the lack of room is that each class requires a different set of books. As both sets cannot be kept in one desk, some have to be kept on tables, or the floor. In this way papers are very easily dropped and lost; books put on the floor may be stepped on and spoiled, which means that the town must buy new books.

“I have tried to show you some of the difficulties with which the pupils of the Oakman building have to contend. Try to imagine yourself at work under such conditions, and I think you will not only wish for but vote for, a new school building.”

June 12

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 1322.pdf](#)

Special Meeting Tonight

A special town meeting will take place in the Hibernian hall this evening at which time a number of articles will come before the voters for decision. By far the most important article in the Warrant is the one regarding the new school building for Turners Falls. In this regard the committee, which is investigating the matter, report in part as follows:

“After careful investigation and consultation with the school committee your present building committee find the following conditions;

“1. The need reported by your committee in 1922 has gradually increased so at the present, time, due to lack of school rooms, it is necessary for the pupils of the grammar grades to attend school part time, one group using the rooms in the Oakman building in the forenoon from 8 until 12.20, and the other group using these rooms from 12.30 to 4.50 in the afternoon. Even under this arrangement the pupils are attending school part time with the result that during the school year the pupils lose 200 minutes of school per week or 7,600 minutes per year. This is approximately five weeks of school lost for these pupils

“2. One group of thirty-five pupils is at the present time temporarily housed in a portable building

“3. There are not any rooms available to meet the requirements of the state law which became effective July 1. 1919, calling for special classes for retarded children. We should not deny these children this special training, for these boys and girls need our help more, perhaps, than the pupils who can matter the prescribed courses without difficulty.

“Your committee finds that during the present school year about 286 pupils have been affected by these conditions”. This includes 256 pupils housed in the Oakman and Portable buildings plus about 30 others who should be in special classes. According to the school records, over 300 pupils will be affected by these conditions during the school year of 1925-26.

“Because of these facts your committee unanimously agree that there is an outstanding need for additional accommodations for the grammar grades.”

The committee also, after careful consideration, will advise building the new structure near the present high school building.

In regard to the size of the building, the committee is agreed that it would be wise for the town to erect a ten-room building. There, are several reasons why this should be done. the chief reason being the slight additional expense required to build a ten-room unit and another reason being the extra expense involved in maintaining two buildings instead of one.

Sept. 4 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 1990.pdf](#)

Public School Notes

The Platoon system will again be used this year at the Oakman school building. While this system is entirely unsatisfactory to parents, scholars and teachers alike, there seems to be no way in which to avoid the difficulty. If it was a question of accommodating one class only, provisions could be made to obtain a suitable room which would answer the purpose temporarily. The housing problem, however, involves not one but three classes, and this fact makes it impossible to secure the necessary quarters.

The sessions at the Oakman building this year will be the same as last, the morning session starting at 8 o'clock and continuing until 12.20 and the afternoon session starting at 12.20 and lasting until 4.50.

Those pupils in classes 8A, 8B, and 7B will report at their respective rooms at 8 o'clock on Wednesday morning each week. The groups comprising 6C, 7C and 8C will report for work at 12.20 o'clock Wednesday afternoon.

This will be the schedule for the first half of the school year and at midyears the classes will reverse their schedules.

Oct. 5 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 2221.pdf](#)

Schools Want Soccer Games

The grade schools of the town are organizing fall contests in football and soccer. The first football game of the season will be held at Unity Park Saturday morning at 10 o'clock, when the seventh grade and eighth grade teams from Millers Falls will meet the same two grades at the Oakman building.

It is hoped that this game will pave the way for others in different parts of the town. The sixth grade at the Oakman school is very anxious to meet another school in soccer any afternoon after school. A great deal of interest at present is being shown in soccer, both among the younger and older boys in town and a great deal more will be shown if the younger school boys can get games for competition.

Plans are already under foot to encourage more soccer in the grade schools.

Oct. 7 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 2240.pdf](#)

[School Contracts Let](#)

At the meeting of building committee Friday night, the general contract was awarded to George H. Reed and company of this town and the contract for plumbing, heating and ventilating was awarded to Kennedy and Sehlegel, also of this town. All electrical bids were rejected by the committee and this work will be readvertised immediately.

It is understood that the work on the general contract will be started within a very few days. The figures now in the possession of the committee show that the building will be built and equipped, the grounds graded and everything completed and ready for occupancy for the sum of the appropriation, which was \$140,000. In fact, it is expected that work will be accomplished for a sum slightly less than the amount" above stated.

Oct. 9 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 2263.pdf](#)

[Oakman School Honor Roll](#)

The honor roll for the Oakman building has been compiled and is as follows: Grade 8A, Four subjects: Helen Balchunas, Alice Gunn, Margaret Jillson, Josephine Tuminski, Thomas Broderick, Lloyd Garrand, Edward Miller, Bernard Relihan and Elmer Pierce.

Three subjects: Margaret Crean, Gladys Corbiere, Lillian Ungrich and John Shea.
Grade 7A, Four subjects: Allen Abecrombie, Antonia Baron, Virginia Cassidy, Bernice Dolan, Bruce Ellis, Julia Garrand. Dorothy Jillson, Henry Kellogg, Edmund Pucci, William Starbuck, Helen Stotz. James Short, Ruth Vassar and Frederick Miller.

Three subjects: Sophie Johnson, Stephen Kulch, Theodore Leary, Camille Macek, Anna Prohovich and Sophie Wojtasiewicz.

Oct. 14 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 2290.pdf](#)

[High School Notes](#)

Arrangements have been made by Superintendent of Schools Joseph S. Keating to organize the evening school next week. The schools will open on Monday evening, October 19, in the Oakman building. Notices to this effect will be posted in all of the mills of the town, and other publicity given the matter.

English will be taught and instruction given citizenship; there will be three independent classes for men and women who are preparing for citizenship and advanced courses for those who have their citizens papers.

These classes will be held every week on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 o'clock in the Oakman school building. For further information in regard to this matter those interested are requested to inquire at the Oakman building on Monday evening.

Oct. 30

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 2419.pdf](#)

[Several Thousand People Expected to Witness Procession and Exercises at Park.](#)

Note: A truncated article to show Oakman School content. e.g.

Hallowe'en night will be a gala affair in Turners Falls when the town will turn out enmasse tomorrow to celebrate the occasion. The various committees have been hard at work for the past week on the preparations, and the event promises to be one of the most unique seen in this section for some time.

A big parade will start the program and will include practically every school child in the town. All children of the town have, been invited to participate and their enthusiasm is at fever pitch.

The school children will meet at 7.15 at the Oakman school building and the Eighth street buildings, all children having been informed by their teachers as to which building they should assemble.

March 13, 1926

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1926 - 0583.pdf](#)

[Night School Graduation](#)

The students of the night school will hold their graduation exercises on Thursday evening of next week, March 18, at the Oakman school building. The exercises will start at 7.30 o'clock and a large class will receive their certificates at this time. During the term there were enrolled 76 students, most of whom were trying for their citizens' papers.

The course is divided into three classes, the work of each class being deigned to equip the student to receive the various sets of papers. The work of the night school has been eminently successful and there are very few cases indeed where the graduates were not able to attain their desires without difficulty. It is estimated that about sixty students will receive certificates at this time. Last year the graduates numbered fifty-two and succeeding years find larger and more interested classes.

March 19

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1926 - 0634.pdf](#)

Night School Graduation

The graduation exercises for the students of the night school took place last evening in the Oakman school building. There was a large class of candidates, about 60 in number, who received their certificates. Papers were read by several of the graduates, all of whom delivered especially fine addresses.

The results obtained from this course are almost unbelievable, as many of the students are unable to read or write a word of English when they start in. Most of these men and women are employed daily at their work, many of them are on tour duty at the mills, and under this handicap they make remarkable progress in a few short months. It demonstrates that they are courageous and ambitious and desirous of bettering their conditions. As one of the students said last evening, "we owe it to our children to improve our minds so that our children and ourselves will not become strangers."

May 5

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1926 - 1031.pdf](#)

Oakman Honor Roll

The honor roll for the pupils in the Oakman school building for the month of April is as follows: Grade 8A. four subjects: Helen Balchunas, Margaret Crean, Alice Gunn, Rose O'Keefe, Catherine Sulda, Josephine Tuminski, Lillian Ungrich, Thomas Broderick, Lloyd Garrand, Charles Hillman, Edward Miller, Bernard Relihan.

Three subjects: Gladys Corriere, Mary Zmunda, Elmer Pierce.

Grade 8B, four subjects; Nellie Kosloski, Mary Zalinski.

Grade 7A, four subjects; Virginie Cassidy, Bemice Poland, Julia Garrand, Dorothy Jillson, Bernard Kelliher, Stephen Kulch, Theodore Leary, Camille Macek, Frederick Miller, Anna Prohovich, Blanche Sojka, William Starbuck, Helen Stotz, Francis Tremel, Ruth Vassar.

Three subjects: Elisabeth McCarthy, Henry Kellogg.

Grade 7B, Four subjects: Helen Pliska

Three subjects: Blanche Kopec. Grade

7C, four subjects: Anna Balchunas.

Three subjects: John Gessing

May 20

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1926 - 1174.pdf](#)

TURNERS FALLS—The-seventh and eighth grade hoys, of the Oakman school building will go to Montague tomorrow afternoon where they will play the boys of the same grades there. On Saturday morning at Unity park the best players of the French school and the best of the Oakman school building will play baseball.

June 22, 1927

Greenfield MA Recorder 1927 - 1526.pdf

News Items

"The following pupils were perfect in attendance at the* Oakman grammar school, Frank Brown, teacher, during the term: Seldon Berard, Francis Cassidy, George Dunbar, Linnie Emery, George Goddard, Kate Hagerty, Willie Hall, Walter Harris, Henry Holton, Charles Hood, Henry Hood, Alice Rist, Charles Schuler, Emma Russell and Allie Tupper.

Aug. 31

Town Improvements of 50 Years Ago

"Mrs. R. N. Oakman, Jr., has. taken the money raised for sidewalks last winter and expended it on fixing up the grounds around the Oakman school bouse. These grounds were, in wretched condition, uneven, and covered with old brick, and unfit for the children to play on.

Mrs. Oakman gave George E. Hartley charge of the improvements, and he has plowed up and levelled the grounds, removed the rubbish, and gas sowed the plot with grass seed. Mr. Hartley will also grade Ninth street from the school house to the avenue, and lay a sidewalk, for the benefit of the children."

Dec. 24

Greenfield MA Recorder 1923 - 2927.pdf

Schools Observed Christmas

This article is "cut" to show Oakman School only. *e.g.*

The sixth grade in the Oakman building, Miss Anna Paly, teacher, presented Dickens* "Christmas Carol" in three acts. The pupils took the various parts well, and appeared in costume. The play, which had been well rehearsed, was a great success and was hugely enjoyed by both actors and spectators. At the close, cake, ice cream, candy and other good things helped to emphasize the grand and glorious feeling of "jest before Christmas," when youngsters are supposed to be as good as they can be.

June 29, 1928

Greenfield MA Recorder 1928 - 1487.pdf

School Attendance Records

Oakman School only. *e.g.*

Grade II—Leonard Mathey, Harry Coates, Stella Staheleck.

Grade III—Lyle Williams, Donald Burkill, Pauline Gashnig, Jennie Staheleck, John Ostroski, Helen Koutsonkoli, Chester Pulaski.

Grade IV—Arthur Burkill, Sophia Tarvicki, Malcolm Fisher.

August 17, 1929

Greenfield MA Recorder 1929 - 1346.pdf

240 Children Complete Summer Course at Turners

Polish Children Have Been Attending School for Past Six Weeks

Commencement exercises for the summer school which has been conducted for the past six weeks by Our Lady of Czestochowa parish will be held this evening at St. Stanislaw Hall.

This summer school has been held to give children of the parish a knowledge of the Polish language and of the country which many of their parent* came from; 240 children have attended the session in the Oakman school daily, with Misses Emily and Cecelia Smuzewska and Stanislaus Sojka as instructors. The Misses Smuzewska teach in the schools of Montreal during the regular school sessions.

February 26, 1932

Greenfield MA Recorder 1932 - 0461.pdf

Annual Town Meeting

Numerous articles are mentioned. Only Oakman school will be given. *e.g.*

Article 8. To take any action to dispose of the Oakman school building and appropriate money for this purpose.

March 15

Greenfield MA Recorder 1932 - 0603.pdf

Debate on Some Articles

-Articles causing the loudest and most prolonged arguments were those dealing with the disposal of refuse in Precincts 1 and 2, the proposed reduction in the salaries of the town board of health and the license commissioners, the disposal of the Oakman school building, and the appropriations for the welfare department, the libraries and the July fourth celebration.

- Article 8 called for town action on the disposal of the Oakman school building and the voters carried the recommendation of the finance committee that a committee of three voters be chosen by the moderator to investigate the condition of the building and the feasibility of holding classes in it. Following an explanation of the present condition of the building by Olaf Hoff, chairman of the school committee, Daniel Daley, another member of the school committee, caused a mild sensation when he charged that facts concerning the situation had been distorted are that two floors of the building were fit for occupancy.

April 2

Greenfield MA Recorder 1932 - 0772.pdf

Town Committees

-Committee for considering the disposal of the Oakman school building, Joseph M. Beaubien, Wallace B. Marston and Charles F. Mosher.

-Committee for obtaining plans and specifications of the proposed high school addition. Olaf Hoff, Dr. Maurice E. Sullivan. Adelard A. Corbiere and Charles W. Higinbotham.

February 25, 1933

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 0419.pdf](#)

Public Works Fund

Numerous articles are mentioned. Only Oakman school will be given. *e.g.*

Article 18 calls for the transfer of the control of the now unused Oakman school building from the school board to the board of, selectmen and the next article is to see if the town will take any action for the disposal of the Oakman school.

These proposals are made by the special committee appointed at the last town meeting to make recommendations for the disposal of the school.

March 7

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 0503.pdf](#)

Montague Finance Board

Placing the Oakman school under the control of the selectmen and appropriating \$150 to cover part of the cost of demolishing the building.

March 10

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 0527.pdf](#)

Tax Rate Questions

Sessions Opposed

The town warrant calls for the appointment of a committee to bring in plans, specifications and estimates for proposals to meet the needs for additional room in the high school, and considerable disappointment has been keenly expressed by those close to the schools that town finance committee has ed the article calling for this committee.

A related subject to come before the town meeting it the disposition of the Oakman school building, a structure which has served two generations of townspeople and which many persons in town past middle life recall attending. The third story of this building has been condemned by the state and the entire structure has lain unused for several years. A committee composed of J. M. Beaubien, W. B. Marston and C. F. Mosher, appointed as requested at the last town meeting. Has investigated the matter and reported in favor of tearing the structure down with the aid of welfare labor.

Opposed to tearing the building down, however, are a number in town who declare that for a small sum the building can be put in condition and four rooms be found for use in the lower two floors, rooms that might be occupied by the lower grades in the grammar school. Such a proposal, however, has met with little favor on the school board, and the matter will now come before the town

March 13

Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 0539.pdf

Town Meeting

Only the Oakman school article will be given. *e.g.*

Under article 3, Joseph M. Beaubien., chairman of the committee appointed, to investigate the Oakman school, reported that the committee favored tearing the structure down, levelling the lot and storing or selling selected items.

April 21

Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 0869.pdf

Turners Falls Losing Landmark Old Oakman School Building Being Razed—Dove Nests Uncovered.

Turners Falls—A landmark in Turners Falls for nearly two generations is being torn down and before many weeks the old Oakman school building will be only a memory. The razing of the three-story brick school building, which many of the older citizens of the town attended, was approved at the annual town meeting in March and the work is being done under the direction of the superintendent of streets, John Casey, with town labor.

Wednesday the cupola and belfry were being taken down, the work on the roof and the top floor being done by Milton Sherman, a roofer of Montague City, who is hired because of the danger from using unexperienced help in removing the roof and slate. The money for this was appropriated at the annual town meeting.

Everything in the building will be salvaged for the town, the brick being saved for manholes, the lumber for the town farm or other town uses, and the desks, seats and blackboards have been sold to Rev. J. W. Casey.

Workman in the belfry found several dozen small doves⁵ just hatched this spring, and since they and their nests had to come down with the building, workers took a number of the doves home to be raised.

The Oakman school was built about 50 years ago and contained two large, light classrooms on each of the first and second floors. The third floor was used as a laboratory and assembly room. As the school enrollment increased the building by 1900 was given over entirely to the eighth grade and high school.

The high school graduating classes were small in those days, only one person, Miss Margaret Connelley, of Riverside, graduating in 1903. The last class to graduate before the high school was moved into the new building on the hill was that in 1905. There were four in this class; Miss Alice Connelly, a sister of Miss Margaret Connelley; Walter H. Ray, Jr., local Insurance agent; Michael Welch, now a dentist in Springfield and Miss Rosetta Bankwitz, now living in the middle west. The largest class to graduate was that of 1904 with 14 receiving diplomas.

⁵ Pigeons.

Nearly all of the older residents of town had attended school in the Oakman building, and for them memories of the old days were revived, when workmen removing the school bell from the high belfry let forth a few peals of the now odd sounding bell.

May 1

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 0955.pdf](#)

Varied Employment Given Those Drawing Welfare or Soldiers Benefits

The Oakman School mention is given here. *e.g.*

The town work at present consists of laying the new surface on Canal street hill, tearing down the Oakman school building and widening the so-called River road between Montague City and Montague[Center].

June 2

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 1251.pdf](#)

Town Workers Busy

The old Oakman school building has been completely razed and now nothing remains but the cellar hole which will be filled in.

February 26, 1934

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1934 Jan-Mar - 0461.pdf](#)

T. F. Taxpayers to Oppose High School Building

TURNERS FALLS—Strong sentiment against the construction of a new high school this year was expressed by the members of the Montague Taxpayers' association at their meeting in the town hall yesterday afternoon.

Claiming the appointment of a committee at town meeting to bring in plans for a new building would be a first step which would inevitably be followed by construction of the new school, the association was unanimous in voting to oppose the measure at the town meeting on March 10.

Several members of the association spoke on the abandonment of the Oakman school building several years ago and its razing last spring. All claimed that repairs would have made the structure safe for occupancy and that at least two grades school could have been accommodated, thus making room for the overflow of high school pupils in the Grammar school building.

Note: the article goes on to speak of other school topics not germane to this writing. *e.g.*

March 3, 1934

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1934 Jan-Mar - 0506.pdf](#)

Taxpayers' Leader Presents His Views on School Administration.

TURNERS FALLS—A defense of his stand in the matter of the abandonment of the Oakman school building and a charge that the taxpayers "were taken for a ride by the school committee and superintendent of schools" are contained in a statement issued last night by Daniel P. Daly.

Daly's statement is as follows; "To the voters of Montague: In speaking at a Rotary meeting Mr. Burke, principal of Turners Falls high school, stated I changed my mind from being favorable to a new building to opposing a new school building. He stated the truth.

"In reply let me ask Mr. Burke why he didn't tell the whole story and not just the part that would make it appear that I was like a railroad timetable, subject to change without notice."

Mr. Martineau stated before the school board that it would cost at least \$35,000 to fix the Oakman school and it was stated by myself a four room building could be built for \$40,000. I favored a new building.

"When the Oakman building was taken down the people of the town know that the building could be altered and repaired for \$15,000. Four grades could be transferred from the grammar school and between the high school and the grammar school there would be plenty of room for all high schools classes. Taxpayers now know that they were taken for a ride by the school committee and the Superintendent of schools."

Note: the article goes on to speak of other school topics not germane to this writing. *e.g.*

December 26, 1945

[Greenfield MA Recorder Gazette 1945 - 3552.pdf](#)

Oakman School Lot Reverts to Electric Company

Because Montague no longer uses the old Oakman school in Turners Falls, once the Oakman high school, the property has reverted to its 1887 owners, the Western Massachusetts Electric company, successors of the Turners Falls company.

Under the law a breach of conditions filed with a deed demands an entry onto the land by its grantors or its assignees.

The first Oakman high School was a wooden structure on the northeast side of Ninth street which burned in September, 1873, a month after its dedication, with a loss of \$14,000. It was rebuilt immediately, after the town held a special meeting to appropriate necessary funds, into a two and a half-story brick school, having two rooms on the first floor and two on the second, with ample room for emergency classes on the top floor.

Turners Falls boys and girls continued using this high school until 1904 when the present Turners Falls high school was constructed. Since that time until about 1932 when, because of its bad condition it was torn down, the Oakman school was used for a grammar school for seventh, and eighth grade students. Toward the end of its existence, the Polish church held classes there during the summer.

Acting as agent for the Western Massachusetts Electric company. Winslow C. Wentworth made an entry upon this 19,600 square feet of school property on Ninth street near its intersections with K street, owned subject to the conditions since May 26, 1887, by the town of Montague.

The land, Wentworth stated, was originally conveyed by the Turners Falls company with the following conditions: so long as the inhabitants of Montague shall use the premises for public school purposes, but upon failure to do so for a one year period, the grantor or successors may enter upon the land and remove the tenants.

The Turners Falls company Was merged with the Turners Falls Power and Electric Company in 1915 and then became part of the Western Massachusetts Electric company in 1942. Montague has ceased entirely to use the land for more than a year; therefore, the entry by the Western Massachusetts Electric company was made so that the title could be cleared and the property would be owned in fee by the company.

March 11, 1946

The town also voted to authorize selectmen to release all right, title interest to the Oakman school lot at K, Ninth and School streets to the Western Massachusetts Electric company, and to accept certain tracts of land in Turners Falls between High and L streets and between High and Park streets described on a plan on file at the office of the town clerk from Quinnehtuk company.

February 16, 1947

[Greenfield MA Recorder Gazette 1947 - 0505.pdf](#)

Razing of the remains of the school building in Montague center was completed as directed at the town meeting of March 1940. Under article four of the annual town meeting, the Oakman school lot was turned over to the Western Massachusetts companies.

June 4, 1954 Special- Montague 200th Anniv.

[Greenfield MA Recorder Gazette 1954 - 2466.pdf](#)

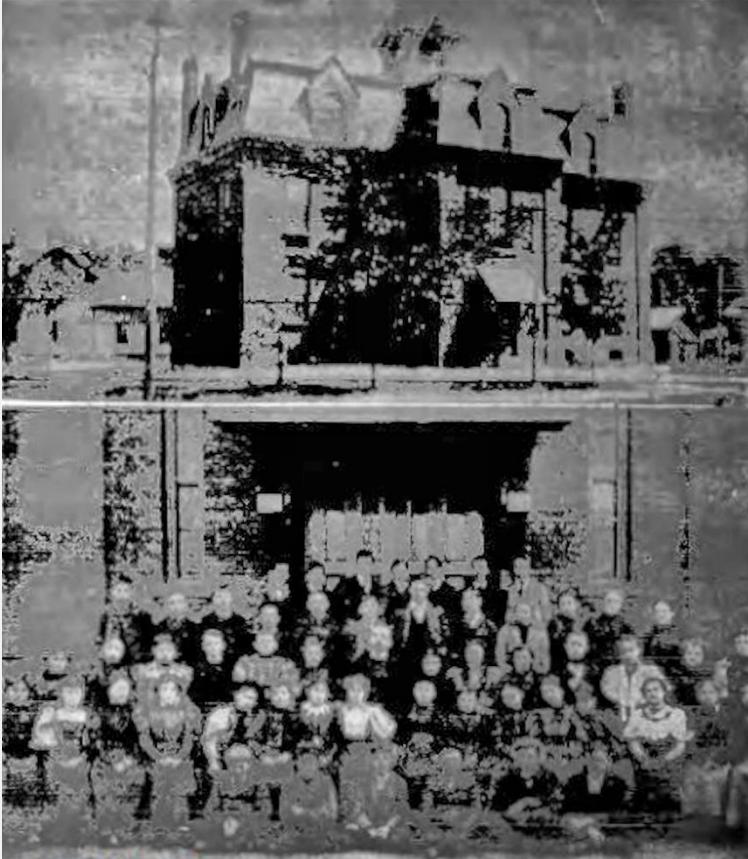
[Greenfield MA Recorder Gazette 1954 - 2447.pdf](#)

Montague has Long Provided Excellent Schools

With inauguration of the high school in Oakman School in Turners Falls, F.N. Brown was named principal there. Mis Nellie P. Fitzgerald, who resides in Montague City, was a teacher in the building in 1897 and continued to teach there and at Turners Falls High School until her retirement in 1943.

New Buildings

The following year, 1873. saw three new schools constructed: Montague Center, cost. 512,264.51 and which burned to the ground in 1945; South District, 1907, and Oakman School, Turners Falls, 514,494.39. Oakman School burned down shortly after it was built but was reconstructed by 1874 at a cost of \$13.754.40. Built by R. L. Goss, local contractor, the building was named in honor [Richard N. Oakman] of the first member to serve on a Montague school committee, 1849.



Original Recorder photo (3rd gen.)

Oakman School in 1895 Boasted these pupils, who lined up in their best clothing for the photographer's visit. Mrs. Eva Wanegar was able to recall all except one name, left to right, are: front, Harry Wise, John McLaughlin. Ralph Stoughton, Herbert Gerald, Daniel Kelleher and Richard Reaveley;

Second row: Cora Chapman, Annie Kavanaugh, Stella Grogan, Winnie Sterling, Madge Kelleher, Lola Ross, Tresea Bussel, Gertrude Crocker, Kate Kennedy, Anna Murphy. Persis Coy, Cristabel Smith, Marion Atherton, Mary Jane Strahan, Josephine Bankwitz and Ada Thompson.

Third row: Gussie Short, Gertrude Nevins, Margaret Niemes, Elizabeth Allen Carrie Pratt, Dora Ripley. Prin. Lucas Lee Baker, Stella Hitchcock, Esther Gilmore, Mary Donoyan, Amber Starbuck, Miss Cowan and Mrs. Philips, teachers, and May Severance.

Fourth row: Ernest Blake, Patrick McCarthy, Edward Horrigan, George Moltenbrey, Edward Donahue, unidentified, George Reaveley, George Ross, Erma Perry, Edna Shepherd, Eva Jamison and Genie Foster; fifth row, Clarence Gingras, Joe Hosmer, Joe Ripley, Sam Batson, Roy Chapman, Clarence Cambel⁶ and Joe Starbuck.

⁶ Might be Campbell.

–**Big Classes**–In 1897, a total of 18 were graduated from high schools in Montague—10 from Oakman School in Turners Falls and eight from Montague Center High School.

June 7, 1955

[Greenfield MA Recorder Gazette 1955 - 2543.pdf](#)

TURNERS FALLS

The Alumni Association of Turners Falls High School was given approval to place the "keystone" of the Oakman School building on the grounds for the reunion this month.

June 16

[Greenfield MA Recorder Gazette 1955 - 2731.pdf](#)

Rededication of Cornerstone of Oakman School by Alumni

TURNERS FALLS—One of the more solemn features of the Turners Falls High School alumni reunion Saturday will be rededication of the Oakman School cornerstone.

The concrete slab is being moved from the lawn of Harold Ray on High Street to a niche on the lawn of the present high school. The dedication will take place immediately following the parade of classes. Miss Nellie Fitzgerald, one of the first graduates of Oakman High School and for many years a teacher in the present high school, will unveil the stone and place a wreath on it.

A speaker, to be announced later, will be introduced by Atty. Francis E. Dolan, Jr., chairman. The veil for the stone is being made by Mrs. Lillian Drago. Others assisting are Ernest P. Pike and Andrew J. Rastalis.[sic]

Oakman School, constructed about 1870, was the first Turners Falls high school. People who attended and those who graduated from the school will, be voted members of the Alumni Association at the annual business meeting.

The redecoration was planned by directors of the association to symbolize unity between graduates of the Oakman School, razed in 1934, and the present school.

Miss Mary A. Shea of Fourth Street was the first Oakman School graduate, 1887. Other early graduates were Harry F. Dunbar, Michael S. O'Leary and Mrs. Michael Kelly.

The school was named for R. N. Oakman, long a member of the superintending committee. When the Grammar School was ready for occupancy in 1926, doors of Oakman School were closed to pupils forever. The school had been used as a grammar school after erection of the present high school in 1904.

Greenfield Recorder

June 23, 1981

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1981 - 2097.pdf](#)

History in The Recorder School Remembered

Greenfield Recorder-Gazette June 23, 1956

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January 27, 1989

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1989 - 0659.pdf](#)

The Way We Were

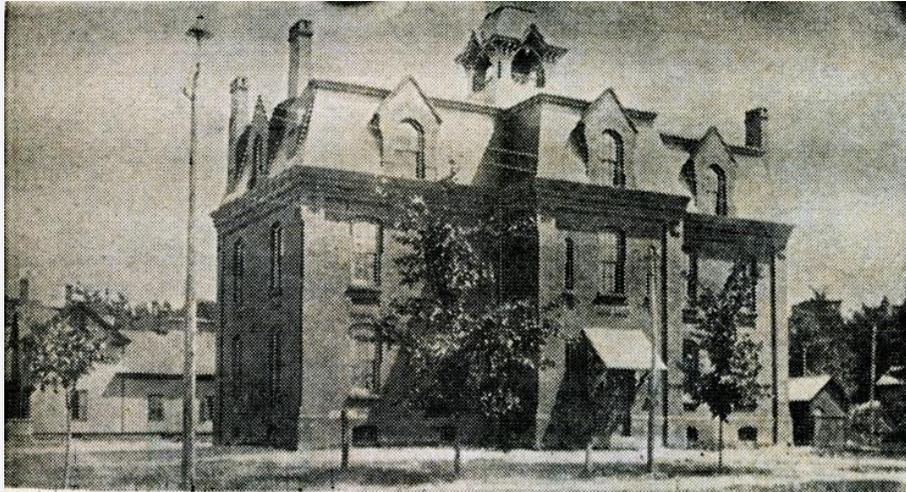
A portion of the Oakman School content is given. *e.g.*

Montague had two high schools operating from 1884 until 1911. Part of Oakman School in Turners Falls was inaugurated as a high school in that village in 1884. Serious crowding resulted in as many as 50 students in a single classroom—there were 80 high school students crowded into in one room at Oakman in 1903.

Oakman continued its high school classes until Turners Falls High School opened in 1905. The Oakman School building was torn down in 1934.

Pictorial





OAKMAN SCHOOL IN 1895 BOASTED these pupils, who lined up in their best clothing for the photographer's visit. Mrs. Eva Wanegar was able to recall all except one name. Left to right, are: front, Harry Wise, John McLaughlin, Ralph Stoughton, Herbert Gerald, Daniel Kelleher and Richard Reaveley; second row, Cora Chapman, Annie Kavanaugh, Stella Grogan, Winnie Sterling, Madge Kelleher, Lola Ross, Tresea Bussel, Gertrude Crocker, Kate Kennedy, Anna Murphy, Persis Coy, Cristabel Smith, Marion Atherton, Mary Jane Strahan, Josephine Bankwitz and Ada Thompson.

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Oakman Class 1895.

Recorder 1954 e.g.
archive



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⁷ Might be Campbell.



Oakman School 1895.
E.W. Cook, Albany N.Y. photo *e.g. archive*



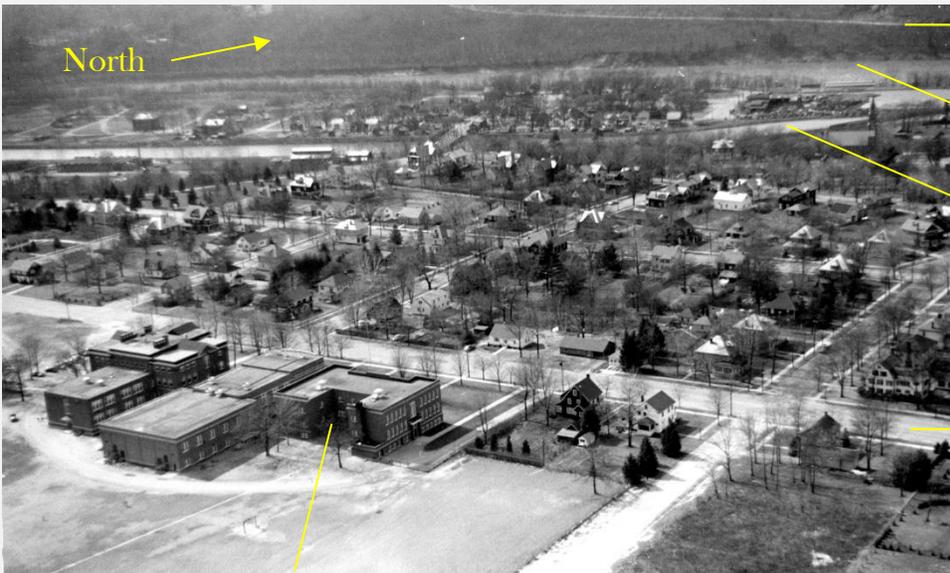
Oakman School. Unidentified class & faculty.
A.W. Howes & Co., Turners Falls, Mass photo c1890.
e.g. archive

Below; unknown class/photographer c1925
e.g. archive





Oakman School 1891. A.W. Howes & Co., Turners Falls. . photo e.g. archive



Turners Falls High School complex c1940. Photographer unknown. e.g. archive

The Oakman School is the “H” shaped, 1926 addition.
 We view the rear of the complex.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

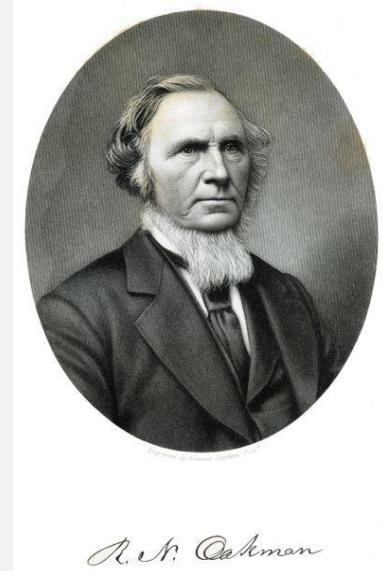
Source: History of the Connecticut Valley, Massachusetts 1879

Vol.II Pp 631-633

RICHARD NICKERSON OAKMAN

Note: R.N. Oakman: Jan. 20, 1818—Sept. 6, 1895 *e.g.*

THE subject of the following sketch was born in Wendell, Mass., Jan. 20, 1818. His great-grandfather, who was probably the progenitor of the comparatively few Oakman families in this country, came from Norfolk, Eng., about A.D. 1750; was a shoemaker by trade, and settled in Lynn, Mass., where he left two sons—Joseph and Eben—trained in his trade or occupation. Joseph eventually migrated from Lynn, married into the Wheeler family, of Phillipston, Mass., and subsequently lived in Wallingford, Vt., where he died, leaving one son namely, Joseph Lathe, who married Mary Nickerson, from Provincetown, Mass., A.D. 1816, and settled in Wendell, subsequently living in Wallingford and Phillipston, and finally returning to Wendell, where he died, Feb. 21, 1842, leaving four sons, of whom three are now living, who, together with their four sons, constitute all the male descendants of Joseph Oakman, formerly of Lynn, now bearing his name.



Mary, widow of Joseph L., married Charles Holway, of Provincetown, and is now living, at an advanced age.

Richard, eldest son of Joseph L. and Mary Oakman, received his early education in the public schools of Wendell, then in a flourishing condition,—so much so, that before he was seventeen years of age he was approbated by the constituted authorities as competent to teach in the common schools of Massachusetts, and taught his first school in Erving, in the winter of 1834-35. His common-school advantages were supplemented by two or three years in the aggregate at the Franklin Academy at Shelburne Falls, when he went to

Provincetown and engaged as principal of the Union Academy at that place, where he was employed for six years.

Aug. 10, 1841, Mr. Oakman married Julia P. Hawkes, of Hawley, Mass., who has been a faithful helpmeet and affectionate and devoted wife and mother. In the spring of 1846 they removed to Montague, purchased a farm, and engaged in the arduous labors of their new calling. An inventory of their resources at the time of their purchase might be written as follows, viz.: good health, great expectations, some energy, and seven hundred dollars in cash; and it is said that they are among the class of those who have acquired a reasonable competence by legitimate farming. Mr. Oakman at this period possessed

unusual power of physical endurance, and, in addition to the labors of his farm, continued for several years to teach in the district schools for the winter season, until he was able to number twenty-three years, during a part or the whole of which he had been engaged in teaching in the schools of Massachusetts.

In 1850, Mr. Oakman was first elected to the several town offices of selectman, assessor, overseer of the poor, and school committee, which offices he continued to hold for many years, to the satisfaction of his fellow-citizens, as will appear by the following resolution, passed unanimously at the annual March meeting, 1876:

"*Whereas*, R. N. Oakman, having been elected to the office of selectman of the town of Montague for the twenty-seventh time, and having declined longer to serve the town in that capacity,

"*Be it resolved*, That, as citizens of the town, we regret to lose the services of R.N. Oakman as chairman of our Board of Selectmen, in which position he has so long, so ably, and so successfully served the town, both as its counselor and financier,—in a word, for the town as for himself; and that this expression of our appreciation of his services be entered on the records of the town."

In 1857, the pauper expenses of the town of Montague having become a grievous burden to the tax-payers, the town determined to try the experiment of an almshouse establishment, and for that purpose purchased a farm with outfits. Mr. Oakman and wife were induced to dispose of their own homestead and take the superintendence of this establishment for the town,—himself as manager of the farm, and Mrs. Oakman as housekeeper and matron. Hon. F.B. Sanborn, secretary of the Board of State Charities, in his first report to the Legislature, speaks of their success as follows: "Mr. Oakman, for six years the able superintendent of the town farm in Montague, has secured a financial success, which makes the experience of that town valuable to the whole State. It appears by the printed reports annually made to the town of Montague that during the six years that Mr. Oakman and wife have had charge of the almshouse the cost of supporting the inmates gradually diminished, until, in 1862-63, it became less than nothing. That is to say, the products of the farm paid all the expenses, including interest on the purchase-money, salaries, and support of all the paupers, and there remained a small balance of profit. The explanation of it is found in the peculiar ability of the gentleman and lady referred to, and in application of principles which ought everywhere to prevail. In September, 1864, I visited Montague for the purpose of seeing the place of this happy experiment, and the persons who carried it on. I found Mr. Oakman still chairman of the selectmen, as he has been for fourteen years past, but that he had ceased to manage the almshouse farm for the town. That had been sold to Mr. Oakman for ten thousand dollars, being in better condition than when he had taken it in hand, and the town had bought a cheaper farm not far off. I have dwelt at such length on the interesting history of the Montague almshouse

because it shows what may be, and what has been, done to lighten the burdens of pauperism in our towns, and introduce method and good order into this branch of town business by the selection of a good farm and a good farmer."

Mr. Oakman is still the owner of this farm, which, however, for the past two years, has been under the management of his youngest son, while he has purchased for himself and wife a fine homestead about a mile away, at Montague City.

Mr. Oakman has represented his town in the Legislature, served his county one term as commissioner and one term as special commissioner, held other positions of responsibility and trust, and is now president of the Crocker National Bank, and one of the directors of the Turner's Falls Company, each with a capital of three hundred thousand dollars, and both located at Turner's Falls, a manufacturing village in Montague.

Mr. and Mrs. Oakman are greatly blessed in their family,—two sons and two daughters,—Richard N., Jr., Julia, Kate, Nellie Pauline, and Frank Hawkes, who have been well educated, and each and all faithful, obedient, and affectionate children, ever bringing joy and sunshine to their parents' hearts and home.

Mr. Oakman is a man of somewhat positive opinions of his own, with a sufficient command of the blunt old Saxon tongue to make himself understood in defending them, and, consequently, has usually been blessed with a few active and industrious opponents and enemies. He has always been counted on the side of radical reform; an anti-slavery man of the old school; by practice and precept an advocate of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors; and always interested in the intellectual, moral, and religious education and welfare of the young.

Source: Biographical Review; Leading Citizens of Franklin County, Mass. 1895 Pp 229-230

RICHARD N. OAKMAN, who died recently, September 6, 1895, after an illness of two weeks, formerly a successful teacher, and later a farmer in Montague, where he was an extremely useful, influential, and valuable citizen, was born at Wendell, Mass., January 20, 1818. His father, Joseph Oakman, was born at Chesterfield, N. H.; his grandfather, Joseph B. Oakman, at Lynn, Mass.; and his great grandfather, Isaac Oakman, was a native of Salem, where he followed agriculture as an occupation. Joseph B. Oakman was a shoemaker, but his son Joseph was a farmer in the town of Wendell. His wife, Mary Nickerson, daughter of Joseph Nickerson, of Provincetown, Mass., was the mother of eight children, only two of whom—Orrin and William—are now living. Her husband having died at the age of forty-nine, Mrs. Mary N. Oakman passed her declining years with her children, living to the advanced age of ninety years. Both parents were members of the Congregational church.

Richard N. Oakman completed his studies at the Franklin Academy, Shelburne Falls, when he was seventeen years of age, and entered upon the arduous vocation of an educator, a calling for which he was, in many ways, especially adapted. He taught school continuously for twenty-three years, six of which were spent at the academy in Provincetown, Mass. In 1846 he came to Montague, where he purchased a farm upon which he settled, and conducted it successfully for a period of eleven years. Having succeeded in clearing the property from all financial encumbrances, he then disposed of it, a good opportunity occurring, and for the next six years had charge of the town farm, during which time he placed it on a self-supporting basis, thus saving an expense of three thousand dollars annually to the town. In 1863 he purchased the property, and resided there until 1877, when he bought the place, which remained his permanent home, and which he immediately occupied, leaving his son to carry on the old town farm, until the latter relinquished farming in order to engage in business. Mr. Oakman then sold the property and afterward devoted his time to his home farm, consisting of about ten acres of fertile land, together with one of the finest residences in this locality.

Mr. Oakman was a Republican in politics, and was long identified with public affairs in the town. He was a Selectman for twenty-eight years, having been continuously in office for twenty-six years; Overseer of the Poor for the same length of time; School Committee for twenty-three years; and a County Commissioner for three years. He was for twenty years a Director of the Crocker National Bank, serving as its President for sixteen years, and had in his possession a beautifully engrossed set of resolutions, expressive of appreciation and esteem, presented by the Board of Directors upon his retirement. Mr. Oakman was also interested in other financial institutions, and he acted as notary public for a period of twenty years.

In 1841 Mr. Oakman was united in marriage with Miss Julia Hawkes, daughter of Ichabod Hawkes, a farmer of Hawley. They became the parents of two sons and two daughters, namely: Richard N. Oakman, Jr., who married Sarah Clarke, of Exeter, N. H., and has one daughter—Anna C.; Julia K., who was educated at Mount Holyoke Seminary, and is a successful teacher; Nellie P., who married Eugene S. Taft, of Greenfield, and has three children—Eugene, Richard Nickerson, and Julia Kate; and Frank Hawkes Oakman, who married Fanny Davenport, of Providence, and has three children—Ethel, Fannie, and Marion. Mrs. Julia H. Oakman died on May 7, 1894, after having well and faithfully performed the duties of wife and mother for more than half a century. She was formerly a member of the Congregational church at Montague, but later became connected with the church in Greenfield.

R.N. OAKMAN, JR.,

Note: R.N. Oakman, Jr.: Sept. 23, 1843—Feb. 17, 1908 *c.g.*

Is the eldest son of Richard N. and Julia P. (Hawkes) Oakman, and was born in the town of Hawley, Franklin Co., Mass., Sept. 23, 1843. A biographical notice of his father, Richard N. Oakman, appears also in this work. The family moved from Provincetown, Mass., and settled on a farm in the town of Montague, near Lake Pleasant, where they remained till the year 1857, at which time they settled upon what is known as the Bardwell farm, in the same town. Until the age of fifteen, young Oakman worked upon the farm, and attended the district schools at Miller's Falls and at Montague Centre. In 1858 he entered Powers' Institute, at Bernardston, where he remained for three years, fitting for college. In 1861, in a competitive examination at Boston, he won the State scholarship-at-large. The same year he entered Williams College, where he remained about two years, taking the highest position in his class. During the period of his preparation for college he taught three terms of district schools,—a term each at Cambridgeport, Vt., Montague, and Belchertown, Mass.



For a portion of the year 1864 he was overseer of the State Reform School at Westboro. In December of the same year he went to Kenosha, Wis., and occupied the position of teller, temporarily (in the absence of the regular officer), in the First National Bank of that place, remaining there till April, 1865. For one month he was overseer of Dr. Allport's fruit farm in Michigan; wages, \$25 per month. In May, 1865, he was book-keeper for the Kenosha Coal Company, in La Salle, Ill.

About July of the same year he again filled the position of teller in the bank at Kenosha, remaining there till September. He then went to New York City, and was connected for two years with the house of Clement, Hawkes & Maynard, cutlery manufacturers, the first year as book-keeper and cashier, the last year as traveling salesman. In October, 1867, he went to Selma, Ala., and filled the position of treasurer of the Cahawha Coal Company. In August, 1869, he received the appointment of deputy collector of customs at Charleston, S.C. In September, 1872, he came to Turner's Falls, and assisted in the organization of the Crocker National Bank, and was cashier and treasurer of the Crocker Savings Institution, in that place, up to Nov. 1, 1874. For one year of the same time he was treasurer of the Montague Paper Company.

RICHARD N. OAKMAN, JR., who occupies a prominent position among the influential and respected business men of Franklin County, was born in the town of Hawley, Franklin County, Mass., September 23, 1843, son of Richard N. and Julia P. (Hawkes) Oakman.

Richard N. Oakman, Sr., who was a son of Joseph Oakman, was born in the town of Wendell, Franklin County, Mass., in 1817. In 1842 he married Julia P., daughter of Ichabod and Paulina Hawkes, of Hawley; and they are now living in Montague, honored and respected residents of the place. They reared a family of-four children, of whom the following is chronicled: Richard N., our subject, is the eldest child; J. Kate, who was educated at Holyoke Seminary, now resides with her parents at Montague; Nellie P. is the wife of

E.A. Taft, of Greenfield; and Frank H., a graduate of Powers Institute at Bernardston, is Treasurer of the Cutlery Manufacturing Company at Shelburne Falls.

Richard N. Oakman, Jr., is a man of scholarly attainments, having been a student at Powers Institute and Williams College. He began his business career as a book-keeper in a bank at Kenosha, Wis., going from there to La Salle, Ill., where he was employed in the same capacity for a coal mining company. Returning East, Mr. Oakman was engaged as clerk and book-keeper for a cutlery manufacturing company in New York City for some time. He afterward spent some years in the South, being at first treasurer of a coal mining company in Alabama, and subsequently Deputy Collector of Customs at Charleston, S.C. In 1872 Mr. Oakman again came North, and accepted the position of Cashier of the Crocker National Bank at Turner's Falls. In 1874 he became Treasurer of the John Russell Cutlery Company, resigning in 1889 to go abroad. The following three years he spent in Europe, engaged in gas furnace engineering, a business with which he is still connected. His financial ability has always met with ready recognition; and he has been interested in various stock companies officially, being now President of the Lamson & Goodnow Manufacturing Company of Shelburne Falls, and likewise of the A.F. Towle & Son Company, silversmiths, of Greenfield.

On March 17, 1868, Mr. Oakman was united in marriage with Miss Sarah E. Clark, of Exeter, N.H.; and the only child born of their union is Anna O., the wife of Frederick H. Newton, of Holyoke.

Politically, Mr. Oakman affiliates with the Republican party. He is a Past Master of Mechanics Lodge of Turner's Falls, has served as District Deputy Grand Master, and is a Past Eminent Commander of Connecticut Valley Commandery, Knights Templars. In religious belief he is a Presbyterian. He occupies a pleasant home at the corner of Church and High Streets, into which he moved in 1886. Mr. Oakman is a man of intelligence,

untiring industry, and superior executive ability, qualities which have proved of the highest service to him in his business career.

Source: *The Conservative Rebel; A Social History of Greenfield, Mass.* 1982 Pp 172-176

. . . The absence of "labor trouble" probably reflected Greenfield's success in riding out the wave of recent depressions more than it did anything else. And for this success, the town had the railroad to thank—ironically, since elsewhere railroad consolidation was being blamed for monopolistic practices which brought on business depressions.

When the Connecticut River Railroad first passed through the New Haven Railroad's hands into the Boston & Maine's in 1892, followed by the B & M's purchase of the Fitchburg in 1900, many Greenfield people had objected strongly. The decline in competition would undoubtedly raise freight rates. But the consolidations did have the welcome effect of increasing rail traffic through Greenfield. By 1903 fifty trains were passing through town each week. At any one point, up to 2000 cars could be counted waiting in the East Deerfield yard.

So much railroad activity also served as an invitation to out-of-town business to relocate in Greenfield, reversing the pattern of the 1860's and '70's when towns newly laid out along the tracks looked more attractive. The Rugg Manufacturing Co., which had started producing wooden hay rakes and snow shovels in Montague in 1842, was induced to move to Greenfield in 1889, following a fire in its Montague shop. Montague tried to convince the company to rebuild, but the combination of a subscription put together by the merchants' association and the offer of the old Munson carriage-parts shop by Franklin Pond brought Rugg here. Within two years the company was turning out 50,000 white ash hay rakes and 40,000 snow shovels annually.

Other business followed. In 1892 the Goodell brothers, Henry and Dexter, moved their small drill and drill chuck manufacturing operation here from Shelburne Falls, where they had started four years earlier. In 1897 they sold the company to William Pratt, himself a Shelburne native, who came to Greenfield to manage the renamed Goodell-Pratt Co. on Wells Street. After selling his share, Henry Goodell started up the Goodell Manufacturing Co. on west Main Street in a one-story shop now occupied by Sweeney Ford.

Another enterprise drawn to Greenfield was the New England Box Co. Formed as a corporation in 1898 as a consolidation of four wood-working mills, with its main office in Athol, the company moved its home office to Greenfield in 1905. Eventually the company came to control nine different plants in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New York, and added a design laboratory to its Greenfield office.

Perhaps the most significant relocation of all involved the A. F. Towle cutlery and silverware company of Newburyport. Operating in that city since 1855, the firm had undergone a division in 1883, with the elder Towle and his son separating from the parent Towle Manufacturing Co. to form the A. F. Towle & Son Co. One of the new company's

major accounts depended on work sub-contracted to it by the Russell Cutlery Co. of Turners Falls. The treasurer of that company since 1874, Richard N. Oakman, was also a stockholder in A. F. Towle's firm, along with another Greenfield businessman, George Rogers, by now a partner in the Millers Falls Tool Co. On the grounds, perhaps, that business for Towle would be easier and more brisk nearer his Turners Falls market, or perhaps on the basis of financial coercions, Oakman persuaded Towle to move his firm to Greenfield in 1890. Oakman himself was installed as president, with Towle taking the vice-presidency of the company.

The town was happy to welcome this new venture. After losing John Russell's factory to Turners Falls, Greenfield had watched a succession of small cutlery and tableware companies go in and out of business—the Greenfield Tool Company's last incarnation as the Greenfield Cutlery Co., for instance, and the Cooperative Cutlery Co., and the Nichols brothers' shop (before they turned to taps and dies), and the G.W. Spurr Manufacturing Co. (which later became the Diamond Electric Soap Co. on Pierce Street). A larger firm like Towle's could be expected to employ a number of skilled grinders and polishers whose only alternative to working for the Russell Co. had previously been to follow the small shops in and out of business.

Besides, a quality silver shop fit right in with the town's metal working orientation. Producing silver flatware required some of the same die-cutting talents required for other kinds of tool making, and to some extent the labor skills were interchangeable. The businessmen's association was so eager to have Towle here that it raised \$10,000 by subscription to build Towle a factory building along Federal Street at Kenwood. The land on which the factory sat was donated to the company by the Pierce and Shattuck families, the building straddling exactly the two property lines.

For a few years the tableware business prospered. The deepening economic depression after 1893 made R. N. Oakman increasingly nervous, however, and about 1895 he began looking around for other product lines with which A. F. Towle & Sons could profitably become involved. His first impulse led him to bicycle parts. Big-wheelers were all the rage in the mid-1890's. Oakman obtained subcontracts to produce bicycle parts from the Victor bicycle company in Chicopee, the Ames Sword Co. in the same city, which had recently converted to bicycle parts itself, and the Schwinn Co. in Chicago.

Then in 1895 or 1897 (the stories conflict as to which year) Oakman was in Chicago, presumably on bicycle business, when he happened to notice a gasoline-powered vehicle chugging along a Chicago street. Driven by its designer, Max Hertel, a former classmate of Carl Benz (of Mercedes-Benz) in Germany, the vehicle had won a small prize in a highly publicized 55-mile road race sponsored by the *Chicago Times-Herald* in 1895. The actual winner was a vehicle built by Charles and Frank Duryea of Springfield, Massachusetts, one of the first successful internal combustion vehicles in the country.

Whether Oakman knew much about the current state of horseless carriage technology is not clear. Attempts to construct a steam-powered vehicle had occurred as early as the 1860's. (The *American Machinist* magazine has recently claimed that John J. Grant, Greenfield's inventor of the adjustable die, operated a steam car on the streets of Greenfield in 1868—two years before there is proof he was even living here—until Selectmen designated his carriage a public nuisance.) Most of the horseless carriage experiments were happening in Europe, however. In the 1870's Paris streets were often crowded with steamers on parade.

Development of gasoline-powered engines in the United States did not occur until 1889 or 1890. Oakman was certainly aware that the Duryea brothers in Springfield were tinkering with a gas-driven car, because he himself had arranged for A. F. Towle & Sons to solder copper fuel tanks for the Duryeas. When Oakman saw Hertel's version, his enthusiasm was immediate. Something about that homemade contraption set Oakman to dreaming of the future. He offered Hertel space in a wooden shed behind the Towle factory and promised complete financing if Hertel would agree to leave his job with the National Biscuit Co. in Chicago and come to Greenfield to supervise production of his car.

In October, 1897, Hertel arrived in Greenfield. He found room on High Street with the Grout brothers, who were themselves experimenting with a horseless carriage prototype in a shop in Orange. Everyone was getting the fever. Hertel took his pattern specifications to Chauncey Wing, who had just moved his foundry from Mead to Pierce Street. Wing knew something about horseless carriages himself, having married the daughter of a Springfield carriage maker named Henry Bailey, who had provided the body for Duryeas' first car. When an apprentice of Bailey's came to Greenfield to work at Moore & Withey's carriage shop, the apprentice naturally took a room with the Wings.

With the aid of much joint effort, Hertel had his car in production by 1898, selling the first to the treasurer of Boston University. In the next two years Hertel and Oakman turned out about fifty vehicles. Gas-propelled, the car used a two-cylinder engine which ran on naphtha. Two people could sit on the single seat; the driver steered the car with a handlebar. Unlike many other horseless carriages Hertel's boasted independent suspension for all four wheels and a relatively quiet motor. Its top speed was an impressive twenty miles per hour.

Oakman had mammoth plans for Hertel's car. He dreamed that the physical plant of the Oakman Vehicle Co. would extend from Federal across Davis and Chapman streets all the way to the railroad tracks, a distance of better than half a mile. He imagined (in this pre-Detroit era) that Greenfield would replace Springfield as the automotive capital of the U.S. One night after serving one of his famous gourmet dinners to his chief adviser, George Lunt, and breaking out a bottle of good rum, Oakman was reported to have dreamed out loud about the future of the horseless carriage. In a reminiscence jotted down

years later, Lunt remembered Oakman imagining that "there would be motor grocery carts, mail carts, trucks, wagons, and pleasure buggies and coaches without end. The street would be full of them, horses would disappear, . . . and the time would soon come when the sparrows and pigeons of the street would starve to death."

It was financing this dream that turned out to be Oakman's undoing. Magnetic in person and capable of rousing fierce loyalty among his friends, Oakman had originally convinced banks in Greenfield, Springfield, Northampton, Easthampton, and Shelburne Falls to support his automotive venture. When more capital was required, Oakman transferred money from A. F. Towle & Sons to the Oakman Motor Vehicle Co. and added perhaps \$100,000 of his own. At some point the bankers balked about delaying repayment of loans. Oakman was convinced that if he could just get more backing, the venture would certainly take off. He may very well have been right. For a period of time it seemed that a substantial amount of capital was on the verge of being invested by Chicago financiers.

Nothing materialized. Local bankers, Oakman speculated, were just too attached to their matched horses to take a risk on a newfangled invention—a vehicle which, after all, often scared their horses into the nearest ditch. In November, 1900, the bankers descended on A. F. Towle & Sons to foreclose. Oakman's fabled exuberance was broken. Hertel went back to Chicago, and the patents developed by the company were purchased by the American Vehicle Co. of Philadelphia.

Meanwhile, the machinery, tools and trademarks of A. F. Towle & Sons were sold in 1902 to men who had worked beside and admired Oakman. The primary mover was George Lunt, who had actually managed the company's ongoing cutlery and tableware operations when Oakman had turned his attention to cars. Lunt had been with the company since serving an apprenticeship in engraving and jewelry repair at the original Newburyport shop. In 1894 Oakman had sent Lunt to Boston to study design with the sculptor Max Bachman. As A. F. Towle's chief designer-engraver and then as manager of operations, Lunt knew the business extremely well.

Joining Lunt were W.C. Bowlen and George Rogers. Bowlen had come to Greenfield to work at Towle & Sons in 1890. Perhaps sensing trouble in the offing, he had left the company in 1894 to study design in Paris. Soon he was back in this country operating a jewelry die-cutting business in Providence. When Lunt needed an expert to share design duties with him in the reorganized company, he remembered and sought out Bowlen. Somewhat reluctantly, it appears, Bowlen agreed, commuting daily to Greenfield from his home in Holyoke where he preferred to live, and only later disposing of the Providence business.

Rogers, for his part, was invited to join as a mainly silent partner-investor. The reorganized company was eager to use his name in the firm's new trademark—Rogers, Lunt

& Bowlen—most likely because the Rogers name was already current in fine silverware. A lawsuit was brought but lost by the original Rogers company in Connecticut. The new firm devoted itself exclusively to sterling silverware at first and was successful enough to buy back all the buildings from A. F. Towle's creditors in 1909. Working with sterling required special skills, and in the beginning the company recruited much of its labor force from towns with a silverworking tradition—Providence, Newburyport, and Meriden, Connecticut. By 1910, however, transplantable workers had become scarce. The company came increasingly to rely on local labor sources, on immigrants from Poland and farmer's sons, for instance, trained entirely on the job.

While A. F. Towle & Sons was undergoing so many transformations, the longer-established tap and die industry underwent many reorganizations of its own. Almost without exception these reorganizations took the form of spin-offs from parent companies, reflecting the continuing volatility and high energy potential of the product. Given their related nature, there is no reason to describe each successive venture in great detail. But the list which follows gives some indication of the hectic activity in the tap and die field over this period. In addition to tap and die shops formed by Wiley and Russell, the Wells Brothers, and the two Reeces prior to 1890, the following tap and die related machine tool shops were in existence in Greenfield by 1912.



Image is digitally enhanced from the archetype. e.g.

The Oakman Car, 1898-1900, was made in Greenfield in a factory behind the A.F. Towle & Sons (Lunt Silversmiths) Plant on Federal St. It was made by the Oakman Motor Vehicle Co. under the sponsorship of Richard N. Oakman and of the Towle Company. The Oakman Car was designed by Max Hertel, a former classmate of Carl Benz (of Mercedes-Benz), who came to Greenfield in 1897 and lived with the Grout Brothers on High St

Gas-propelled, the car used a two-cylinder engine which ran on naphtha. The driver steered the vehicle with a handlebar. Hertel's car boasted independent suspension for all four wheels. Its top speed was twenty miles per hour. About fifty of these cars were made before the banks forced the closing of the Oakman Motor Vehicle Company.

Source: [Turners Falls Reporter](#), February 19, 1908 Vol. XXXVII, No. 8

Death of Richard N. Oakman, Jr.

Richard N. Oakman, Jr., formerly of this town, died at his home in Brooklyn, N. Y., Monday afternoon⁸ after a very brief illness of peritonitis, and his body was laid to rest in the family lot at Montague this afternoon, the funeral, by request of the family, being private. Mechanics Lodge of Masons sent a pillow of flowers, and the Commandary[sic] of Knights Templar also sent a pillow.

Mr. Oakman having been an enthusiastic Mason, the several orders desired to conduct the funeral, but it was the wish of the family that all display and ceremony be omitted.

Mr. Oakman, "Dick," as he was lovingly called by a host of good men and true when he was a young man with us here, was a splendid specimen of manhood in many shades of his excellent character, and if he had failings they certainly did not come from the heart or from design. Having had experience in national banks, and in handling of government money as collector of customs, through the influence of his father, then a leading spirit in the town, he came to Turners Falls to start the two banks, being cashier of one and treasurer of the other.

He came in September, 1872, and got the banks in operation very soon. The writer has had occasion to remember him kindly since the first day he came to town, when he first discovered the sterling qualities that made up the man. The present writer being a good printer, and familiar with bank stationery, Mr. Oakman hailed the fact with undisguised delight, so that this bank would not, as was the universal custom, send its printing to the cities, but be kept right at home where it belonged, and the writer set up and printed every check, note and draft, in all the colors known then in bank printing, that the bank used.

Mr. Oakman's kindly suggestions, advice and information, never supplied so generously by any one[sic] else, caused the writer to take up the business of a bank stationer almost exclusively, which he has followed ever since, at first covering the whole country, in a small line, but finally enlarging the line and keeping to New England. So Mr. Oakman's kindly thoughtfulness really was the means of keeping such a plant as the [Reporter](#) operates to the great benefit and advertisement of Turners Falls. When the hard times of '73 came and hard times they were, with poverty and even hunger staring many a family in the face—the merchants in this village were in a sorry plight, and the manufacturers were not far behind. During all those bitter days good "Dick" Oakman had a pleasant smile for all financial sufferers, and a little note was often discounted more on the maker's honor than on the signature, and yet not a copper was ever lost to the institution. The scores that

⁸ February 17, 1908

received genuine favors from the man would have worn their fingers down to the quick rather than a loss should come to taunt his good heartedness.[sic]

Mr. Oakman and Mr. Dustin bought a majority of the stock and controlled the cutlery here together for many years; being a royal and loyal pair to work together in such an undertaking, the former being the manufacturer, and the latter disposing of the product.

They worked together like beavers, and made their work tell, and they were happy in their business relations. Mr. Oakman was a man with a lot of local pride, and like Mr. Dustin, his whole thought was for the benefit of this village. He would have built a home here, lived and died here no doubt, had not the evil time come, as it has come often here, when it was considered a light matter to oppose his wishes and interests, and beginning with the church in which he worshipped and thoughtlessly extending, Mr. Oakman quit the village and bought what was once the Whiting Griswold mansion in Greenfield, and lived there for many years, his interests waning in Turners Falls all the time until Mr. Dustin purchased his stock in the cutlery and assumed Mr. Oakman's position as manufacturer as well as marketer of the product.

Mr. Oakman was an enthusiastic Mason, and was the first **master** of Mechanics lodge, and around him gathered **the** best that was in the village, and **took with him** an equal pride in the success of **the** lodge. In politics **he was** an ardent republican, but never desired to meddle with office holding.

Mr. Oakman was married in Charleston, S.C., to Miss Sarah Clark of Exeter, N. H., and one child was born to them, Anna C., who is still at home. At first they lived in the second story of the Clapp block on the Avenue, when dwelling houses were scarce, and stayed there until expanding Turners Falls called for a fish market in the basement, when they moved into the Lawyer Barton house, on Prospect street, a lone sentinel on the outskirts, and entertained most royally. With a love for the place, the Oakman family were both to be in a way obliged to make their home in Greenfield, but finally their interests centered elsewhere. Mr. Oakman leaves a widow, his daughter, Anna, and two sisters, Miss Kate Oakman and Mrs. E. S. Taft of Greenfield. and Frank H. Oakman, manager of the Lamson & Goodnow manufacturing Co. at Shelburne Falls.

R.N. Oakman, Jr. was the eldest son of Richard N. and Julia P. (Hawkes) Oakman, and was born in Hawley, Mass., Sept. 23, 1843. The family moved from Provincetown, Mass., and settled on a farm in the town of Montague, near Lake Pleasant, where they remained till the year 1857, at which time they settled upon what was known as the Bardwell farm, in the same town.

Until the age of fifteen young Oakman worked upon the farm and attended the district schools at Millers Falls and Montague Centre. In 1858 he entered Powers institute at Bernardston, fitting for college. In 1861 in a competitive examination at Boston, he won the state scholarship at-large. The same year he entered Williams college where he

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Transcription by Ed Gregory September, 2016

Codicil:

Gleaned from:

Montague Schools

Then and Now

1754-1954

A publication specially prepared for the Town of Montague Bicentennial Celebration.

June 6 to June 13, 1954 (Pp 32-33)

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OAKMAN BUILDING

No doubt the first large school building in Turners Falls was the Oakman school, named for R. N. Oakman, long a member of the superintending school committee. No reference could be found concerning its exact origin, but Mr. Frost referred to it in 1874-5 as one of the few buildings in good condition.

In 1878 "a room was fitted up in the south end of the hall, in the third story of the Oakman School building," says one report.

Oakman building was long used as an elementary and grammar school, but in the 1890's became the first Turners Falls High School. In 1903 it was necessary, because of

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crowded conditions, to open third floor rooms for seventh and eighth grades.

When the present Turners Falls High School was built in 1904, Oakman again became used exclusively for grammar grade classrooms. For several years the third floor was used as an assembly hall.

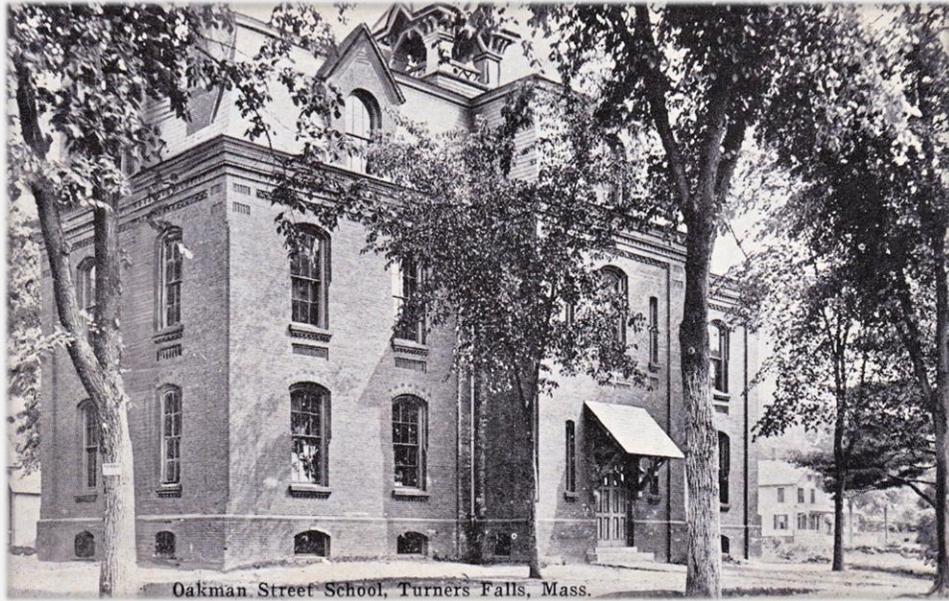
The Oakman building served as shelter for various upper grades until 1926. At the request of the state, the use of the two third floor rooms had been discontinued in 1924.

In 1924 Mr. Fred C. Abercrombie, chairman of the School Board, reported, "For a long time your Committee has been greatly disturbed at the conditions existing in the Oakman Building and particularly with reference to the fire hazard upon the third floor-where two grades have been previously accommodated. As a means of temporary relief your Committee early in the fall authorized the Superintendent of Schools (Mr. Keating) to establish a platoon system for the grades accommodated at the Oakman Building. You, as citizens of the town, have been advised relative to the hazard existing at the Oakman Building and although your Committee does not approve of the platoon arrangement, it was adopted as the only course that would remedy an increasing liability."

Mr. Keating strongly urged replacement of Oakman School in 1924.

When the new Grammar School was ready for occupancy in September of 1926, the old Oakman doors had been closed to pupils forever. It stood idle until citizens voted in March, 1933 to dispose of "both building and the land upon which said building is located." This decision was made at recommendation of a committee which had been appointed by Moderator Arthur H. Porter to consider such action. The committee members were Messrs. Joseph M. Beaubien, Wallace B. Marston and Charles F. Mosher. The building was razed in 1934. School Board chairman then was Mr. Olaf Hoff, Jr.





An undated postcard c1900. *e.g.* archive
-south elevation-

