JACOB S. SPALDING
AND THE BARRE ACADEMY

By John W. Noble

INTRODUCTION

This is intended to be the history of an academy. However, it may become a biography of a man. The school had a flourishing existence of thirty-three years. The first twenty-eight were under the direction of this one individual. Five years after his death, the institution was no more.

The man was asked to direct what was to be a new academy. He accepted the challenge, took the school and made of it a fine institution. In a day when only the endowed academy could readily survive, this man, with little more than the tuitions of students as support, held this academy to its high standards. Soon after he died, the school passed out of existence.

To separate the man from the school, or to attempt the opposite, would be an injustice to both. The school depended to a great extent on this man for what it became.

Thus I feel that in narrating the history of Barre Academy, I would tell only a part of the tale if I were not to review the life of Jacob Shedd Spaulding.

I

Little is known about the early years of Jacob Spaulding. His origin, judging from available evidence, was not auspicious, however. He was the first born child of Laommi and Edna (Shedd) Spaulding on August 24, 1811.1

Evidence is equally divided as to the place of Jacob’s birth. Some records give Tewksbury, Massachusetts, while an equal number state the neighboring town of Chelmsford. I am inclined to believe the former is correct, as two Spaulding genealogies2 have distinctly shown his parents to have married and lived in Tewksbury for a number of years. This is not at all conclusive, however. It is not unreasonable to suspect that Mrs. Spaulding may have left her resident town to have her first child.
When Jacob was at the age of four, his mother died. He received a stepmother when his father married a second wife, an Esther Wright, on May 6, 1817. But the family was again bereaved in February of the following year when the second Mrs. Spaulding passed away. Jacob was then six years old. At some time during his early years, he received a second stepmother as his father married again, this time to Esther Marshall. No date has been found for this wedding, however.

Jacob was the oldest child in a family of three brothers, one sister, one half-sister, and one half-brother. It is fairly certain that his father was a farmer, and probably not too prosperous a one. This is indicated by the fact that the father had been one in a family of thirteen children, and by the fact that Jacob received his formal education relatively late in his life. Furthermore, an exhaustive history of Temple, New Hampshire, to where the Spauldings later moved, gives no account of the family, indicating, it would seem, that the family was most certainly not a prominent one. An old friend of Jacob Spaulding has mentioned how, throughout his college years, "he had the same unrelenting struggle with poverty, and it was his pride in after years to recall how he worked summers upon the farm and taught school winters to pay his expenses ...." Jacob Spaulding appears to have had a rather humble origin.

It was when Jacob was very young that the family moved to Temple, a small town in southern New Hampshire. Here they remained for several years and here Jacob grew to manhood.

At some time in his youth, young Spaulding received a serious injury of an undetermined nature and was forced to rest and recuperate. He hungered for something to read, and so a minister friend from the neighboring town of Milton brought him Plutarch's Lives. Jacob began it with indifference, but became interested and inspired. At that moment he began an earnest pursuit of learning. In later years, he stated many times that his life had been redirected by this great work.

Another source of inspiration at about this time is supposed to have come from a young lady who had also moved to Temple with her family. This girl was to later become Jacob Spaulding's wife. Mary Wilkins Taylor was born and lived for several years in Harvard, Massachusetts. She was two years his senior. She was also a devout Congregationalist. Mary is said to have had a strong influence on her friend Jacob, and to have encouraged him to devote his entire life in the service of his Master. At the age of twenty-three, Jacob Spaulding, with two younger members of his family, joined the Temple Congregational Church.
At first, his intentions were to get a limited academical education, and then to prepare for the ministry at Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine. He altered his plans, however, and decided on another manner of serving his Lord.

Jacob had attended the common schools, and now began preparing himself further for entering college. Studying during the intervals of his work upon the farm, reciting to the Congregational minister at Milford, and completing his preparation for college at New Ipswich Academy, he entered Dartmouth College in the fall of 1837 at an age of twenty-six years.

Dartmouth's archives reveal little about Jacob Spaulding's college career. The Dartmouth College Merit Roll gives his scholastic record only for his freshman year. For one who had received a sparse and interrupted education, and taking into consideration that it was his beginning year, Jacob did reasonably well. The marking system at that time differed from the present system. According to John K. Lord, who has written a history of the college,

By the arrangement of the course of study in 1830 . . . a system was introduced of marking scholarship on a scale of 1 to 5, of which 1 was the highest mark. . . .

In languages, Spaulding received a 2.9, in mathematics, 3.2, and in the examination at the end of the college year, he attained a 2.0. In the present system at Dartmouth, a student is given one point for each “D” received, two for each “C,” three for every “B,” and four points for each “A”. If we were to transcribe from the old to the present system, Jacob would receive 2.1 in languages, 1.8 in his mathematics and a high 3.0 in the final examination.

His scholastic performance must have improved, for while he did not graduate Phi Beta Kappa, he is said to have “maintained a high standing in a class that was rather remarkable for scholarship.” An acquaintance of Jacob Spaulding in college days many years later spoke of him as

. . . not distinguished, while in College, for remarkable ability or brilliant scholarship; but he was known and respected for his unbending integrity, untiring industry and unyielding tenacity of purpose. These qualities, combined with a noble and generous spirit, gave him position and won for him the lasting respect and confidence of all. . . .

Apparently Jacob’s extra-curricular activities were very limited as he is not supposed to have “acquired celebrity in the gymnasium, nor at rowing or baseball, . . .” Apparently his time was well spent in
keeping up with his studies and in teaching school and working on the farm.

In June of 1841, Jacob Spaulding at thirty years of age graduated from Dartmouth College in a class of eighty-seven men. There was but one classmate older than he, and most of them were considerably younger.

Jacob Spaulding was awarded the degree of Master of Arts. In those days, there existed a rule that would seem most odd if in practice today. The Master of Arts degree was

... automatically conferred on payment of five dollars ‘on graduates of three years’ standing who had sustained good characters and been engaged in literary pursuits.’ ... The custom was discontinued in 1894.¹¹

And so Jacob Spaulding received his diploma, and stepped out into the world at a time when most men of his age were well established in some form of endeavor. However, it did not take young Spaulding long to find his work.

II

In the days when three years of study would qualify one for graduation from Dartmouth, it was not unusual for a student to spend a part of his college years teaching school in some community of New Hampshire or Vermont. This was true of Jacob Spaulding who spent the winters of his college course in teaching, gaining valuable experience in preparation for his future vocation, at the same time earning a part of his way through college. He must have acquired some reputation as a pedagogue, for in the year, 1840, he was asked to Bakersfield, a small town in a remote corner of northern Vermont, and there to assume charge of a newly constructed academy building. He accepted the calling, travelled the long journey to Bakersfield in the autumn of 1840, and spent the fall and winter terms in giving the academy a fine beginning. Leaving in the spring with plans to return in the fall, he went back to Dartmouth, completed his college course, and graduated that June.

Thereupon he returned to Temple. In this village Mary Taylor had been teaching school for several years. On August 24, 1840 Jacob’s birthday, the two were married. Together they made hasty preparations for the long journey that lay ahead.

It is somewhat of a coincidence that the mother of the late Willis H. Hosmer, former principal of Spaulding High School which now stands where the old academy used to be, was once a student of Mary
Taylor's. She is said to have recalled, in the years shortly before her death, how sad and dismayed she and her schoolmates were that their preceptress, whom they all adored, was going to leave them. It seemed a terrible thought that this lovely young woman was going off with Jacob Spaulding into the "wilds of Bakersfield." 12

Mary, like Jacob, had received her education in the common schools and at New Ipswich Academy. She is said to have developed, while in school and for years afterward, a poetic ability of a promising nature. Her works were later collected in a volume, Poets and Poetry of New Hampshire.

In late summer of the year 1841, Jacob and Mary made their way northward across New Hampshire and Vermont, finally arriving and settling in Bakersfield.

The "... people of Bakersfield, having been prospered financially, bethought themselves that no better investment could be made than to erect a building to be used as an Academy, ..." 13 A dispute arose, however, as to where in the town this academy should stand. One party desired that it rest north of a given line, while another faction wanted the proposed academy south of it. A third group was willing to compromise. This controversy raged for some time. The southern bloc was finally victorious, however, and in 1840 a brick structure, to be called Bakersfield Academical Institution, was erected in the southern part of the village.

As we have seen, Jacob Spaulding was called to direct the academy in its opening in the autumn of 1840. In the following year he had returned to be its full time principal. In a catalog of the institution, published for the year 1842-1843, the following statement appeared:

The trustees deem themselves fortunate in having obtained permanently the services of Mr. Jacob S. Spaulding, the present Principal. Hitherto, from the commencement of the school, general satisfaction has been given, and no reasonable labor, it is believed, will be spared in the future on his part to render the Institution one of the most efficient and thorough in this part of the State. Associated with him in instruction, is Mrs. Spaulding, a lady eminently qualified for the station. Particular attention will be paid by her in the class of young ladies to the cultivation of habits of taste and propriety. 14

The trustees were not to be disappointed in their expectations, for the school grew rapidly under Mr. Spaulding's direction. In the year 1842-1843, the "board of instructors" consisted of the Principal, his wife as preceptress and teacher of drawing, and an assistant by the name of E. D. Shattuck. In the following year a teacher of vocal music
was added to the faculty. No statistics were available for subsequent years until that of 1846-1847 when the staff numbered thirteen, a rather surprising increase for a three year period. Although the faculty dropped back to nine in number, it increased again. There were fourteen instructors at the school the last year that the Spauldings were at Bakersfield.

Available catalogs of the academy for various years indicate that the enrollment mounted steadily until near the end of Jacob Spaulding’s career as principal. The enrollment in the fall of 1842 is listed as 122 pupils. In 1846 it numbered 246, and in 1848 it had risen to 351. A slight drop occurred in 1849, the year of the California Gold Rush, but in the mid century year the enrollment had reached an all time high of 361 pupils.

Typical of most academies of the period, Bakersfield Academical Institution segregated its students into two departments: the Classical and the English. The Classical course of study was well named, for it was composed almost entirely of Latin and Greek subjects beginning with the grammar and progressing through steadily more difficult readings. It was designed almost completely to prepare the student for college entrance. Cicero and Virgil were digested in the second year, and in the third and final year, Homer’s *Iliad*, Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, Herodotus, Livy, and Tacitus were all studied. The only subject given, that would in this day be considered a social science, was one entitled “Ancient Geography,” dealing undoubtedly with the classical nations. A slight sprinkling of mathematics in the form of algebra and geometry was included the first two years. This comprised the narrow classical curriculum given in the year 1846-1847 at the academy in Bakersfield, and it was one typical of this period of educational development.

The English department, noticeably subordinated to the Classical in the manner of listing in the catalogue, named no subjects as being part of the course of instruction, but stated that it was “... designed to be thorough and systematic, embracing those studies calculated to prepare the pupil for business or teaching...”

And so the academy seems to have fared well in its early years under the competent direction of its principal. This good fortune was not to continue, however. The disappointed faction in the north of the town had been at work. Determined that there should be an academy in their part of the village, this group had succeeded in getting the patronage of the Troy Conference of the Methodist Church, and in 1844, another academy building was erected. The trustees of this new institution
even named it Bakersfield Academy as though it were the only institution in the town. It was later called Bakersfield North Academy.

Reverend N. J. Moore, a brilliant Latin scholar from northern New York, was secured as principal. He succeeded in building up his new school so that its enrollment in the year 1846-1847 numbered nearly 170 pupils. As might have been expected, competition ran high between the two academies, and it was oftentimes extremely bitter. The trustees have this to say in their school catalog of 1846-1847:

Near one hundred students are the present (Fall) Term in attendance, and considering the short time since the School went into operation, this is thought sufficient to decide the question, whether another school in this region was called for. The trustees seek no controversy with a neighboring institution; the circumstances which led to the organization of both, have been given in the public prints of the County, and that statement has never been denied. If one school originated in local feeling, so did the other, and here we are contented to let the matter rest.16

Mr. Spaulding’s institution seems to have held the upper hand in the struggle, however. For while Principal Moore’s enrollment numbered 170 pupils in 1846, it appears to have declined steadily after that date. The south academy, on the other hand, was usually twice the size of its rival, and continued to increase its enrollment until the school year 1851-1852. In this year it fell back to 70 pupils in number.

Thus it appears that, while for a time the town of Bakersfield was large enough for two academies, it did not so remain. In the early years of both academies there were few other schools in the surrounding area. Within a short time, however, numerous schools sprang up in nearby districts. The competition with public high schools steadily increased. Another factor was that while the North Academy was church supported, Spaulding’s Bakersfield Academical Institution was without support or endowment. Finally, the division of local patronage of Bakersfield had its effect. According to one man, “... it was certain that any division of local support would ultimately cost the town its rare opportunity; and so it proved, ...”17

During these years, Jacob Spaulding earned an outstanding reputation as an educator. Students from all parts of the state and from other states, who had come under the tutelage of the strict but kindly gentleman, went out and told of this fine schoolmaster.

Word of his outstanding ability reached another Vermont town, that of Barre. It was in the spring of 1852 that Jacob Spaulding was asked to go to Barre and take charge of what was to be a new academy. He decided to take the offer. Years later, it was stated that "... the
more central location, the greater wealth of the community, the smaller likelihood of competition and the brighter hope of ultimate endowment led him to accept. It is likely that the last of these reasons was the strongest of his motivations. Mr. Spaulding had for many years hoped that Bakersfield Academical Institution might someday be endowed.

So Jacob and Mary Spaulding made ready their departure from Bakersfield where they had resided for eleven years. The townsfolk regretted to see them go and bade them a sad farewell. To Jacob Spaulding, the St. Albans' Messenger paid the following tribute:

Mr. Jacob S. Spaulding closed the summer term of his school at Bakersfield on the 23rd ult. This term completed the eleventh year of Mr. Spaulding's connection with Bakersfield Academical Institution. During that long period he has labored arduously, zealously and successfully. He has established and built up a flourishing Academy; he has educated more students in his time than any similar institution in Vermont.

What happened in Bakersfield after Jacob Spaulding left? The institution which he had succeeded in holding to a high standard declined rapidly and finally passed out of existence. With Bakersfield no longer the educational center of northern Vermont, competition between the two rival schools disappeared, and for several years there was "only one school taught in Bakersfield, sometimes in the North, and sometimes in the South Academy ..." Years later, Reverend Calvin B. Hulbert, D. D., one time President of Middlebury College, paid this tribute to Mr. Spaulding:

... Bakersfield Academical Institution lived and moved and had its being in Jacob S. Spaulding. Hence it came to pass, and with no fault of his, that when he left that picturesque village in the north, the institution for whose upbuilding and prosperity he had labored with such untiring industry ceased virtually to exist.

III

In the early years of Barre's history, its founders seem imbued with a desire to provide their children with a proper education. A district school system, common to every New England town, was established, and by 1808 there were ten one room school houses scattered through the village.

As years passed, the desire of several townspeople that the youth of Barre be furnished with a secondary education grew more intense. The movement gathered increasing support. Finally, in 1849, a group of
prominent townsmen drew up a petition for an Academy and presented it to the State Legislature. The petition was accepted and the charter secured on November 3 of that year. It named as trustees of the proposed school a group of ten men including notable lawyers, physicians, and property owners of the town.

The first meeting of the trustees was held May 11, 1850, in the tavern of James Hale. The board of trustees was filled by the election of five additional members. Officers of the corporation were elected: Newell Kinsman as president, Abram Barker as treasurer, and Leonard Keith as secretary.

In June, the trustees convened again and drew up the following Basis or subscription paper:

By a vote of the Trustees, the powers and privileges of the Subscribers shall be as follows: Each Subscriber shall have one vote for every twenty-five dollars he shall subscribe, in appointing the following committees, namely, a committee to locate the Academy, a committee to purchase the necessary grounds, to contract for and superintend the erection of the Academy, to purchase the apparatus and all needful appurtenances. Also, they shall have power to appoint a committee, equal to the Prudential committee of the Trustees, to confer with said committee in making the Constitution and Laws of the Academy, and in procuring teachers to put it in operation. The subscriptions are not binding unless $4000 are subscribed.

A committee of three was chosen to solicit subscriptions for the proposed Academy. The soliciting began in February of 1851, and it was not long before the sum of four thousand dollars had been raised.

At this point, it is necessary to examine a controversy which had arisen. In this case the dispute was not over where the proposed Academy should stand, but over who should control it. Barre at the time was divided nearly equally into three Protestant sects: the Congregationalists, Methodists, and Universalists. The Academy board of trustees had been carefully determined so as to be equally representative of these denominations. In the Basis or subscription paper, no mention was made of denominations. However, when the committee of three for soliciting subscriptions was chosen, each church had its representative. Reverend Andrew Royce, rector of the Congregational Church, Reverend Joseph Sargent, the Universalist minister, and an attorney and Methodist, Leonard Keith, comprised the committee.

The Universalist minister, however, declined to solicit his people, and although a few Universalists made contributions, no paper was circulated among the members of that church. Undoubtedly, the reason
for the lack of Universalist participation was that its members erected a church building that year, toward which probably all of their financial resources were directed. The Methodists subscribed only about seven hundred dollars. The Congregationalists, on the other hand, possibly seeing their opportunity to control the academy in the apathy of the rival churches, raised over three thousand dollars in subscriptions. Immediately the Congregationalists were criticized for attempting to dominate the proposed Academy. They replied that they were only making the donations which no other group or individuals would make, and they clamored for greater control.

It was over the interpretation of the Basis that the main controversy raged. The majority of trustees, taking a literal interpretation, argued that the agreement specifically empowered the subscribers to appoint committees for locating, building, and furnishing the Academy. It further empowered a committee to confer with the trustees in “making the Constitution and Laws,” and in “procuring teachers,” but that this was all that was empowered. A “loose” interpretation of the Basis, reminding one of the literal-loose interpretation squabble over our nation’s Constitution was taken by the donors, who argued that with all the specific powers granted to their committees was implied the right to direct the destiny of the institution. They further maintained that the source of support determined the right of control. The donors submitted a resolution to the trustees demanding specific acknowledgment of this right of control. Their resolution was rejected. This resulted in a stalemate for several months. The trustees could not direct an academy that did not exist, and the donors were apparently not going to build an academy they could not control.

However, the donors are said to have consulted legal advice and found it favorable to their position. Early in the year of 1852, they went ahead with their plans. As provided for in the Basis, committees elected by the donors determined the site of the Academy (where Spaulding High School now stands), purchased the grounds, and contracted a builder to erect the edifice. Again, as provided for in the Basis, a committee of the donors met with the prudential (or executive) committee of the trustees to confer on “procuring teachers” for the institution. If the prudential committee of three had had but one Congregational representative in meeting on equal terms with the donors’ committee, the Congregationalists would have held the balance of power. Such seems very likely and must have been the case, as Jacob Spaulding, a Congregationalist as well as a prominent educator known throughout the state, was selected to become principal of
Barre Academy. On May 10, 1852, Mr. Spaulding signed a contract by which he agreed to “... act as principal of Barre Academy so long as it shall be for the mutual interests of all concerned, ...” 23

Construction of the Academy building began in May of 1852 and was completed in August of that year. It was a wooden structure measuring sixty by forty-five feet at the base and was masked by a huge portico, an architectural feature typical of the period. Perhaps most prominent in appearance was a belfry which jutted from the roof and which enclosed a bell that was for years to call young pupils to their classes.

The building contained two stories and an attic. On the first floor were four recitation rooms and a vestibule. The chapel, a laboratory and another recitation room were on the second level. The total cost was $3,747.86. Imagine erecting a building for that price today! 24

Soon after the Academy was erected, a dormitory or boarding house, as it was called, was constructed on an adjoining lot. It was not owned by the trustees, however. The stock of the building was held by various people in the town, the building being rented by the school for the students.

Jacob Spaulding and his wife arrived in Barre in the summer of 1852. On the first day of September, Barre Academy, with a staff of nine teachers (including Principal Spaulding, for he was a teacher until the day of his death), opened its doors to 172 young men and women. Most of the students were from Barre and surrounding areas, but several came from other Vermont towns, and as many as seven came from outside the state. This was a triumphal beginning for Barre Academy.

At some undetermined day following the opening of school, a ceremony was held. It was the dedication of Barre Academy. For the occasion Mrs. Spaulding had written the words for a hymn. They were set to music and sung by a choir of thirty-five student voices:

Our Father, God, with reverent fear,
Awed by thy presence we appear;
We ask thine aid, we seek thy grace,
O fill and consecrate this place.

* * *

Let streams of blessings from this source,
Wake joy and gladness in their course,
And render back with usury blent,
This rich provision thou hast lent. 25

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President Worthington Smith of the University of Vermont came to Barre and gave the dedicatory address. He had words of praise for Jacob Spaulding, congratulating the “friends and patrons of the Institution, that it opens under the auspices of one man whose name, we . . . have been wont to regard as an omen of success . . . .”

Meanwhile the fight for control of the school had resulted in a second deadlock. (The Spauldings had stepped from one rivalry to another.) It became apparent to the Congregationalist donors that their appeals to the trustees for what they claimed their right of control were to be of no avail. Forthwith they took their case to the State Legislature of 1853 in the form of a petition that the Academy charter be amended by the addition of ten trustees named by the donors. They were rewarded with success. According to a report of the prudential committee of 1854, the bill passed both houses by large majorities.

The trustees of Barre Academy now numbered twenty-five. The ten novice members, of course, were Congregationalists. This denomination now had control of the school. Thus ended a three year struggle. Its ownership finally determined, Barre Academy appeared to face a bright and promising future.

IV

The trustees had good reason to be optimistic that opening year of 1852. A new Academy with a competent man secured as Principal had resulted in 172 pupils as a beginning enrollment. This was a gratifying indication of the town’s need for an academy.

The trustees held their meetings annually, usually in the spring of the year. When the board was increased to twenty-five men, Jacob Spaulding was among the ten to be added. He acted as secretary of the board until 1856, when in that year he was elected president. He served in this capacity until his death.

The prudential committee was an elected body of three men, and served as an executive agent of the trustees. The president of the board was not a member of this committee, however.

Several men served as trustees of the Academy for great lengths of time. David Carleton, for instance, was for twenty-seven years a member of the prudential committee. The rate of turnover of the trustees was small, averaging one or two a year.

In the first Academy catalog, published in 1852, the trustees set forth the objectives of their new enterprise:

The primary object which the founders of this institution . . . have ever
had in view, is to furnish to the youth of their own vicinity, and to such others as may avail themselves of its advantages, the means of securing a sound, practical education, for the business of life. Second, to afford to young men designing to fit themselves for College, the opportunities for so doing, on terms as reasonable as at any other Institution. Third, to secure to Young Ladies the means of securing a liberal education. Fourth, to qualify and prepare those who wish to enter upon the work of instruction. . . . Fifth, to promote virtue, morality and piety in the young. . . .

Note the benevolent and cosmopolitan nature of this statement of objectives. The Latin grammar schools were the predecessors of the academies, and had gradually faded from existence. They died because of the demand for schools that were less exclusive, and because of the need of more practical courses of instruction, particularly for those young people who could not enter college. Compared to the Latin grammar schools, the academies furnished to more youth a much more practical education. Barre Academy was typical in this respect. It also carried out its objectives with success.

The success that the Academy achieved in fulfilling its goals was due largely to the skill and labors of its principal. He devoted himself entirely to the task of managing the institution and educating its students. An ardent believer in a study of the classical languages as the best possible training for an able mind, he made certain that each student received his share of mental discipline. The transfer of training doctrine, although not well accepted today, was the prevalent educational theory of the time. According to this theory, a study of difficult subject matter, such as the classical languages, resulted in a transfer of ability to other fields of mental endeavor.

However, acquisition of knowledge alone did not satisfy Mr. Spaulding. While he heartily approved of difficult learning as good mental exercise, he would not condone mere memorization. On the contrary, he rated understanding as of more value than knowledge. Thus as a teacher of arithmetic, he forbade the mere use of formulas, but insisted continually that

... If you understand the process, . . . you can make your own rules; while the student who depends on rules for guidance is lost if he happens to forget. . . .

The instructors were selected by Mr. Spaulding. Two of his teachers and two former pupils at Bakersfield came with him to teach at Barre. One of the former students, a Miss Emily Felt, taught art and music for Mr. Spaulding for a great many years. Miss Alice Tenney was a devoted helper who was with him a considerable length of time.
The longest record of service was attained by Mr. J. M. Kent who taught penmanship at Barre Academy for a period of nineteen years.

Jacob Spaulding’s most devoted assistant, however, was his wife Mary, an excellent teacher in her own right. She served as preceptress, as at Bakersfield, and taught “drawing, crayoning and monochromatic.” She retired in 1860, however. It must have been that she fulfilled the role of assistant principal, as it was not until after her retirement that Mr. Spaulding regularly designated one, sometimes two, and occasionally even three assistant principals.

Mr. Spaulding, himself, at various times taught nearly all if not all the subjects at the Academy. He was a man well versed in nearly every major field of knowledge, his love of learning motivating him to be a scholar his entire life. His specialty and favorite subjects, however, were the classics. As attested by his students and by others, the Greek and Latin at Barre Academy were taught extremely well.

Most of the men instructors were college graduates. Mr. Spaulding recruited a great number from the University of Vermont, several from Dartmouth, and a few from Amherst. The majority of the women teachers, however, were graduates of the Academy itself who had taken part in the “Teachers Class” and prepared for the teaching vocation.

For several years, Mr. Spaulding employed mature and outstanding pupils preparing for teaching as instructors. They were known as “assistant pupils.” Generally, he listed one or two with his staff each year. However, this practice he discontinued after 1867.

In the 1852 catalog of the Academy, it was stated that the teachers, as well as aiming “... to be thorough and systematic in their instruction...” and “to develop the latent powers of the mind...” would also attempt to “... render the studies that may be pursued in the various departments a subject of interest, and to clothe them with the power of attraction...” This last worthy objective is of significance in that it indicates the Principal and instructors of Barre Academy had the desire, unlike many of the old academies, of making the process of learning other than one of drudgery.

As stated in the Academy catalogs for a number of years, the discipline of the school was “decisive, yet parental.” In the 1853 catalog, it was stated that the “... government of the school is designed to be parental, and an attempt will be made to excite in the scholar a love of right-doing; and to awaken within him a sense of his obligations to himself, to his parents, and to his Creator.” Judging from the context of the catalog statements and from testimony given by former stu-
dents, it appears that the discipline of the school, while strict, was not overly severe. Corporal punishment was rarely if ever used. According to one alumnus, the "discipline of the school was firm, but kind and sympathetic." Of the principal, it was later said by a former student of Bakersfield that

... no man, probably, could manage 200 students with more apparent ease and make them accomplish more than J. S. Spaulding. His discipline was the best, and though he was usually very strict, he managed to gain and keep the good will of all his scholars, that is of all who wished to learn, and he was a terror to the rascals.

A fairly tight rein was held on the out-of-school activities of the pupils, however, as the parents who sent their children to Barre Academy were informed by the catalogs that its students "... are not allowed to attend public gatherings, or to leave town to go on excursions, without special permission from the Principal." This was the rule in spite of the fact that, as usually was stated a few paragraphs farther on, "Barre Academy is located in the midst of a quiet and industrious people, and so far removed from the great thoroughfares of the State that it is comparatively free from those seductive influences that annoy schools in our larger towns."

In the light of our present day standards, such regulations seem unusually restrictive. In those times when morality was a prime concern, however, such rules of restraint were not atypical of institutions of this kind.

The religious influence in the school, although strong and pervading, is said not to have been sectarian. The Congregationalists, apparently sensitive to the charges that they were "perverting the school for sectarian purposes," replied with a statement published in the first catalog of the Academy:

... it is the wish and purpose of the Principal, and of the Donors, that nothing sectarian shall be allowed in the management ... of the Academy. The Bible will be honored, and its religion and requirements enforced, without interfering with the creed of any pupil or with his choice with respect to his place of public worship.

Throughout the life of the Academy, its students were required to attend the daily devotional exercises at the school (conducted each morning by Mr. Spaulding) and a weekly Biblical exercise. Regular church attendance on the Sabbath, was also rigorously insisted upon, however "... at such places as the parents or guardians may designate ...," or, as stated in catalogs of later years, "... at such places..."
as the students may choose.” Furthermore, reduced rates of tuition were given to students intending to enter the ministry regardless of the chosen denomination.

How much pressure was actually put upon the students to accept the Congregational doctrine cannot be said. From available testimony, however, it seems doubtful that they were strongly pressured. One man later said that Mr. Spaulding “... preferred the orthodox school and the Congregational policy, but he was not dogmatic ...” Mr. Spaulding did have a strong influence on the religious motivation of his pupils, however. His purpose was to build characters as well as minds, and this he accomplished. Many of his students in later years spoke most highly of the inspiring spiritual leadership they had received from Jacob Spaulding.

"Uncle Jake," as his students were beginning to refer to their respected principal, established as courses of study the Classical and English curriculums. As at Bakersfield, the Classical course was designed to prepare the student for college entrance. Again, it consisted largely of Latin and Greek, giving the student the rigorous mental training that the colleges demanded he have.

However, certain changes were taking place. The trend in education in the United States was the giving of greater significance to subjects of more practical nature, to subjects dealing more with contemporary things and with reality. The curriculum of the modern high school is the result of this slow but constant evolution. This development is reflected by the change in curricula at Barre Academy even within the space of its comparatively brief existence.

The Classical course, as offered at Barre Academy in 1855-1856 had even been modified slightly from that at Bakersfield. It was not quite so thoroughly classical. English grammar and "general history" had made their appearance. The remainder of the course, however, was made up of the grammar and readings in Greek and Latin, and a little algebra and geometry.

It is interesting to compare this curriculum with the Classical course offered at the Academy twenty-four years later, just before Jacob Spaulding died. In 1879-1880, both the Classical and English curricula took four years to complete, while before that year only three were required. This change was one made by most academies of the period, and was part of the evolution of the present day four year high school. Barre Academy made its change in curriculum in order
“... to correspond with the advance standard recently adopted by the New England colleges.” The classes had been generally designated as “senior,” “middle” and “junior,” The added fourth year became the “sub-junior” class.

In the Classical curriculum of 1879-1880, as compared to the one early in the Academy’s development, there was greater emphasis on science and the social subjects, although the classics were still completely dominant. For instance, physiology was introduced, and advanced arithmetic was taught in the first year. The histories of Rome, Greece and England were also studied. Natural philosophy, logic and rhetoric rounded out a curriculum somewhat more practical and contemporary in content.

In neither the Classical nor the English courses, with very few exceptions as the substitution of French or German for the Greek “in case of young ladies,” was the student allowed to choose a subject. The elective system had not yet come to the academies, and the student took what was prescribed for him.

The English curriculum was designed for students who would not go on to college, for those who would enter business, teaching, or certain of the professions, or who merely desired a secondary education. As might be inferred from the title, the English course of instruction stressed the study of the English language. There was also great emphasis laid on science as astronomy, chemistry, geology, botany, zoology, physiology and, for a few years, even mineralogy were studied. Thus the students who did not take the Classics received their mental discipline through the memorization of scientific terms. A smattering of social sciences and of philosophy and religion completed this course of instruction.

Comparing the English curriculum of 1855-1856 with that of 1879-1880 reveals only a slight development as a result of progressive educational influences. However, Surveying, the Science of Government and Bookkeeping appeared in the later curriculum as examples of more practical subject matter.

Another development that took place at Barre Academy was the disappearance of the summer term. In the early years of the Academy, students attended four terms, one in each season of the year. Between each term, they were allowed a vacation of approximately one week. These came in November, February and May. A longer recess was given in July and August of four or five weeks. As years passed, the summer vacation gradually lengthened, and in 1882 the regular summer term was abolished.
The course of study offered at Barre Academy in 1855-1856 and the course in 1879-1880 are here presented in that order.

**COURSE OF STUDY**

**CLASSICAL**

**JUNIOR YEAR**

*Fall Term.* Latin Grammar and Reader, Algebra, English Grammar.

*Winter Term.* Latin Reader, Latin Composition, Algebra, Ancient Geography.

*Spring Term.* Caesar, Latin Composition, Geometry, General History.

*Summer Term.* Caesar, Latin Composition, Geometry, General History.

**MIDDLE YEAR**

*Fall Term.* Sallust, Greek Grammar and Lessons, History of Greece.

*Winter Term.* Sallust, Greek Grammar and Lessons, Greek Composition.

*Spring Term.* Cicero, Xenophon's Anabasis, History of Greece.

*Summer Term.* Cicero, Xenophon's Anabasis, History of Greece.

**SENIOR YEAR**

*Fall Term.* Virgil, Xenophon's Anabasis, Algebra, Latin and English Prosody.

*Winter Term.* Virgil, Homer's Iliad, Greek Prosody, Greek Antiquities.

*Spring Term.* Virgil, Homer's Iliad, Geometry and Algebra reviewed.

*Summer Term.* Latin and Greek Reviews, &c.

French and German may be substituted for Greek in case of young ladies.

Exercises in General Grammar and Grammatical Analysis will be required through the course; Rhetorical Exercises and Composition every Saturday; Original Declamations the last three terms.

**ENGLISH**

**PREPARATORY**


**JUNIOR YEAR**


*Winter Term.* Algebra continued, History continued, Physiology.

*Spring Term.* Natural Philosophy, Ancient Geography and Mythology, Book Keeping.

*Summer Term.* Astronomy, Botany, Linear Drawing.

**MIDDLE YEAR**

*Fall Term.* Chemistry, Geometry, Linear Drawing completed.

*Winter Term.* Geometry completed, Zoology, Rhetoric.


*Summer Term.* Geology, Botany completed, Natural Theology.
SENIOR YEAR

*Fall Term.* Chemistry completed, Butler’s Analogy, Perspective and Crayon Drawing.


*Spring Term.* Astronomy completed, Evidences of Christianity.

*Summer Term.* Moral Science, Mineralogy, Reviews.

French, German, or the Ornamentals can be substituted for a part of this course. Composition, and Rhetorical Exercise every Saturday.

COURSES OF STUDY

CLASSICAL COURSE

SUB-JUNIOR CLASS

*Fall Term*

*Winter Term*

*Spring Term*

JUNIOR CLASS

*Fall Term*

*Winter Term*

*Spring Term*

MIDDLE CLASS

*Fall Term*

*Winter Term*
De Officiis. Anabasis. Logic.

*Spring Term*

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SENIOR CLASS

Fall Term

Winter Term

Spring Term

ENGLISH COURSE

PREPARATORY
English Grammar to the Verb. Arithmetic to Percentage. History of the United States and Geography.

SUB-JUNIOR CLASS

Fall Term

Winter Term

Spring Term

JUNIOR CLASS

Fall Term

Winter Term

Spring Term

MIDDLE CLASS

Fall Term

Winter Term

Spring Term

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According to Ellwood Cubberley, in New England before the days of normal schools, the academies served as the major teacher training institutions. Barre Academy was typical in this respect and from its “teachers classes” went a number of men and women into the teaching profession. Appearing in catalogs for several years was the following announcement:

A Teachers’ Class will be organized during the Spring and Fall Terms, to which instruction will be given on the various subjects connected with School Teaching; such as the arrangement and government of schools, the best method of teaching, etc.

Nearly every year, there were a few members of the “graduating class” listed among the students enrolled at the Academy. They were graduates who had returned for advanced study. According to the catalogue, students “... who wish to remain and prepare themselves for advanced classes in College, or for teaching, can continue their course of study so far as it may be desired.”

Examinations were held at the close of each term. At the end of the school year, the students of the Senior Class in the Classical department met their last hurdle in the form of a two and one-half day examination which the public was invited to witness. The seniors were examined on the studies of their final year. The examination was given not by a teacher but by an examining committee of several reputable men, usually from outside of town. This committee, at the conclusion of the ordeal, wrote a formal report. The following is a portion of the report given by the Committee of 1866:

The examinations were rigid and thorough. The members of the Class were seated at separate tables, and were furnished with pen and ink for the solution of mathematical problems. No books were used except for the base text of the classes, and no communication was allowed between members of the Class.

In the examination it was made apparent that the pupils had not only been
well instructed, but thoroughly drilled in the fundamental principles. This point, so essential to good scholarship, was made especially prominent in the class in Latin and Greek. . . . 47

The graduating class was usually small in number. In those days, the quality of an institution was judged very largely by the difficulty of its course of study. Not everyone passed his examinations at a reputable academy. That not everyone passed them at Barre Academy is indicated by the fact that of over several thousand students who entered under Jacob Spaulding, in his last year only 270 had graduated.

The graduation ceremony, frequently held in the Barre Congregational Church, was not unlike most graduations of today. It was usually conducted in the following manner. A small orchestra played while the audience assembled. Then the music stopped, a prayer was said, and the orchestra began again. When it had finished, a member of the graduating class stepped to the stage and delivered the first oration, a memorized speech usually dealing with some phase of history, government, or ethics, or with some eminent person. The first orator of the graduating exercises of the class of 1873 spoke on "The Quadruple Alliance of 1814." His speech was followed by one on "The Cost of Victory." A third speech was entitled "Diligence is Genius." This continued, with interludes of music, until every member of the graduating class had delivered an address. After another musical interlude, the diplomas were awarded, followed by more music, followed by the benediction. The audience shuffled out with the indefatigable orchestra playing its final number.

Although the students at Barre Academy spent much of their time in studying, they did not spend all of it in this manner. In 1855, there were organized two "Literary Societies." Each was presided over by a teacher. According to the catalogs, these societies had as their purpose "... to furnish an opportunity for the members of the school to improve in Composition, and extemporaneous debate." 48 In 1872, these groups merged into a "Social Fraternity," however with the same stated objectives. This group began having anniversary banquets in June of each year and had as speakers such eminent men as President J. B. Angell of the University of Vermont, Asa Dodge Smith, President of Dartmouth College, and the Honorable Justin S. Morrill, Vermont's outstanding representative in the United States' Senate.

Rhetorical exercises presented by the Senior and Middle classes, to which the public was invited, were usually given in the spring of the year. They were ceremonies similar to the graduation exercises without the awarding of diplomas.

The students of Barre Academy found various forms of recreation
with which to amuse themselves. The boys played baseball, and both young ladies and young men occasionally took walks around the countryside. Although students were forbidden “... to leave town or go on excursions without special permission from the Principal ...,” one such excursion resulted in the sudden and tragic death of a student of the Academy.

... The drowning of Miss Emma Vaughn of Berlin, some twenty years ago, will be well remembered by ... citizens of Barre at that time. A sad fatality! which plunged the entire school into mourning. A gay party of boys and girls set out for a walk to some picturesque falls, situated within easy walking distance of the academy, and, descending a steep and rocky declivity at the foot of the falls, two of the party missed their footholds and were precipitated ... into the seething, foaming tide below. The river, swollen to a great depth by recent storms, takes Miss Vaughn far out into the flood and carries her to the meadows below, where her bruised and lifeless body is finally caught by some impediment and rescued by the party who had followed on. Her brother, crazed by the tragic event, is with difficulty kept from throwing himself into the flood in the mad attempt to save his sister. Her escort ... is fortunately carried around in a whirlpool, as he falls, and is easily saved. ... 50

Unlike many academies that became involved in “town and gown” enmities, Barre Academy enjoyed the best of relations with its home village. The students of the Academy were largely from Barre and surrounding areas. Barre, in the 1870’s, was only a moderately expanding community, but one destined to see a very rapid growth in coming decades. Foreign immigration was a major cause of its growth. This was true of many New England towns. An examination of the enrollment in the Barre Academy catalogs reveals the extent of this infiltration of foreign elements in the community. In the early years of the Academy, common “Yankee” names of English origin entirely constituted the enrollment. In later years, however, names of French-Canadian origin such as Lapoint, Cantillion, Rouelle made their appearance. The names Tassie and Kinney indicated the Scotch migration to Barre, while a few Irish names like McConnell and McCrillis also appeared.

The facilities of Barre Academy, while certainly not lavish, were fairly adequate. By 1880, the school had a sizable library of seven hundred volumes. The “apparatus,” as it was called, was also extensive, the Academy possessing many devices that were used as aids for instruction. A cabinet of geological specimens was owned by the school, as was a “cabinet of curiosities” displaying various articles from India, a gift of a missionary and father of one of Mr. Spaulding’s pupils.

The trustees for many years desired to erect a new and larger
boarding house. In 1866, their plans materialized and the old house was bought and torn down. On another adjoining lot, behind the Academy building, the new boarding house was erected. It was completed in 1867.

The new house was a large, mansard roof structure of three stories in height. On the first floor were two parlors, and rooms for teachers. On the second and third floors were twenty-six sets of rooms for students, each set consisting of a study room, bedroom and closet. Attached to the rear of the boarding house was an “ell” which was the kitchen and dining hall. The catalog of 1868 made this announcement in respect to boarding:

... The student will provide his own bedding, towels and napkins. Every article of linen should be distinctly marked. Mr. Spaulding, the Principal, will have entire control of the house. Mrs. Plimpton will take charge of the domestic arrangements; ...

The minimum cost of board at the old boarding house, when Barre Academy first opened, was but one dollar and fifty cents a week. In 1864, however, the worst inflation year of the Civil War, the cost of board jumped to two and one-half dollars. It reached a height of three dollars and fifty cents the year the new boarding house was constructed but declined after that date.

From the belfry on the roof of the Academy building, early each morning of every season in the year, the tenor bell pealed forth the call to chapel. The ringing of that bell, summoning the pupils from their boarding house, left an indelible impression on their memories. One student became inspired and wrote a poem. Half a century later, it was reprinted in the Barre Daily Times, however no author was acknowledged. An old alumnus of the school happened to read the poem, and recalled that he had written it years ago as a student, and had read his composition before one of the literary society meetings. He was Mr. J. Newton Perrin, residing in Plainfield, Vermont at the time, and now deceased.

"THE ACADEMY BELL"

There hangs a bell in Barre,
In a cupola old and brown,
That with its merry pealing
Is want to wake the town.

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You hear it ring at morning,
    Then again in the afternoon,
And sometimes in the evening,
    Its music floats through the gloom.

There is nothing in its ringing
    That bestirs the village around,
And yet its peculiar swinging
    Has a purpose true and sound.

And so the bell is partner
    With the academy old,
And rings to gather students
    Into an honored fold.

To them it speaks with meaning,
    And says in accents clear:
‘Come to the halls of learning;
    Who would be wise come here.’

Thus speaks its tongue with language,
    And why should we doubt its power?
For though it is metal and lifeless,
    It called us here this hour.

One wish for the bell in Barre,
    In the cupola old and brown;
May its music long continue
    To wake the quiet old town!

And after its final ringing,
    When hushed at last its tone,
While keeping a silent vigil
    In the cupola alone.

May the pleas it made for learning
    When its tones knew not such rest
Live on, eternal echoes
    Within the human breast!

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8 *The Montpelier Argus and Patriot, August 3, 1887, Clarke address.*
9 *The Vermont Chronicle, August 14, 1880. Reprint of an address by Professor Orcutt before the Vermont State Teachers' Association, August 6, 1880.*
10 *The Montpelier Argus and Patriot, August 3, 1887, Clarke address.*
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12 Testimony given by Mrs. Willis H. Hosmer of Barre, Vermont.
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29 *The Spaulding Sentinel, April 29, 1930.*
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31 *Catalogue of Barre Academy, 1853,* 15.
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33 *The Montpelier Argus and Patriot, August 3, 1887, Reprint of Clarke address.*
Quote from a letter written by W. D. Wilson to Albert Clarke in 1887.
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35 *Catalogue, 1859,* 22.
36 *Catalogue, 1842,* 13.
37 *Catalogue, 1855,* 17.
38 *Catalogue, 1874,* 15.
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40 *Catalogue, 1876,* 15.
41 *Catalogue, 1855,* 18.
43 *Catalogue, 1879,* 17.
45 Catalogue, 1864, 17.
47 Catalogue, 1866, 11.
48 Catalogue, 1855, 19.
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(to be continued)