

Record Group [RG] #03**Name: School Records****Dates: 1806-1984****Size: 3.0 li. ft. (7 8.75 x 10.75 drop front boxes, 1 legal sized & 1 letter sized document box)****Name of Creator:** Individual School Districts, Superintending School Committee, School Treasurer, School Board, Individual teachers

Historical note: Secomb in his *History of the Town of Amherst* reports that the first reference in town records to schools is at the 1762 town meeting where the Selectmen appear to have been directed to create five districts and employ a teacher in each one. Subsequent town meetings sometimes provided an appropriation for schools and in other years rejected such funding. A state law in 1789 set the amount to be raised for public schools from local property taxes in each community. Secomb provides an almost annual description of votes at town meetings affecting the establishment and funding of individual schools.

In 1806 the report of a committee to re-district the town for school purposes was approved at a town meeting. That plan served as the basis for the school district system in Amherst until 1881. Amherst created nine school districts in 1806. The original district numbers, names, and geographic locations were:

- No. 1, Centre district ("Amherst Plain" or the Village);
- No. 2, *aka* Lovejoy district (northeast; renumbered District No. 7 in 1838);
- No. 3, Cricket Corner (southeast);
- No. 4, Christian Hill (west of the Village);
- No. 5, Danforth, later Ponemah (south of Souhegan River);
- No. 6, Pond Parish (east of the Village);
- No. 7, Wilkins (adjoining Milford) later No. 2;
- No. 8, Campbell (north of the Village near Mont Vernon line, later called North and Mack Hill); and
- No. 9, Chestnut Hill (adjoining New Boston and Bedford).

Changes in numbering and exact geographic areas occurred over time. There were as many as fourteen districts in the nineteenth century. Not all had schoolhouses as the children were sent to neighboring towns' schools.

The Somersworth Act of 1848 permitted a school district to manage its school affairs separate from the town; authorized graded schools, including a high school, and empowered school districts to borrow money for the construction of new school buildings. Later in the year, the law was amended so that it applied to any school district in the state which should adopt its provisions. Amherst Village took advantage of the Somersworth Act

in order to have a high school, combining the Village East (No. 1) and West (No. 2) into a single district, a new No. 1 in 1852.

In 1867 New Hampshire established a State Board of Education; by 1870 municipalities could abolish multiple districts and create a single local district, and abolish prudential or superintending committees and establish a school board elected at town meeting. It became mandatory in 1885 for local school boards to be elected at the school district meeting. Amherst enacted the change in 1881 when the districts were united under a single Board of Education, replacing the town-wide superintending committee and district prudential committees.

The three member elected Board of Education was comprised of one member serving as President or Chair, one as Secretary, and the third as purchasing agent (Treasurer). The neighborhood schools remained with the last one room rural school closing in the 1930s. The high school, grades 9 and 10 only, lasted until 1902. In 1905 the town voted to participate with other towns "in a supervisory union with a superintendent to guide and prod the boards and taxpayers to vote for improvements, to commence a program of closing the one-roomers, and finally to offer a rural community a four-year practical arts high school." (Amherst Historical Society, *Amherst: Sleeping Town Awakens*, page 59)

For additional information about the history of education in Amherst and the State of New Hampshire, see the following:

Amherst Historical Society, *Amherst New Hampshire 1881-1982: A Sleeping Town Awakens*. (Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing) 1983. Pages 52-54 provide summary of locations and names of schoolhouses at the turn of the twentieth century.

Bush, George Gary *History of Education in New Hampshire, Issue 3* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1898 Book available online.

Secomb, Daniel F. *History of the Town of Amherst. Hillsborough County, New Hampshire* (Concord, NH: Evans, Sleeper & Woodbury), 1883. Chapter XIV has detailed information extracted from the Town Record Books. Book available online.

Somersworth Act information taken from James O. Lyford, ed. *History of Concord New Hampshire from the original grant...to the opening of the twentieth century*. Authorized by City Government in 1896; published in 1903. Book available online. Additional research by K. Holman.

Annual school reports in this collection also are helpful sources.

Scope and Contents: The School Records Group contains four series: 1) Individual district and town-wide Record Books, 1806-1949; 2) Annual School Reports, 1857-1898; 3) School Registers, 1869-1871; and 4) Treasurer's Cash Books, 1919-1935, 1941-1954.

Series 1. Record Books, 1806-1949 (17 bound volumes in 4 drop front boxes and 1 legal document box, 1.5 li. ft.) are minute books containing notices of meetings, agenda, and votes taken on the agenda items. The container list following is arranged by District Number and then in chronological order. The last three volumes, 1881-1949, represent the town-wide School district board.

Individual record books are the most complete for three of the districts: District 1 (Village or Plain or Centre), 1806-1881; District 4 (Christian Hill, west of the Village), 1808-1881; and District 6 (Pond Parish, east of the Village), 1806-1881. There are two record books for District 3 (Cricket Corner, southeast part of town), 1817-1880. For the others there is a single record book. Missing entirely are District 5 records (Danforth's Corner or Ponemah, southwest part of town, south of the Souhegan River) and the Ponemah Road Schoolhouse which prior to 1852 was the Taylor/Lovejoy district and after 1852 District 2 (The Acre). See Katrina Holman's summary *School Records of Amherst NH* for greater detail about each bound volume.

To protect the bound volumes, similarly sized volumes have been placed together in appropriately sized boxes. *Note carefully the box number for the volume you are seeking.*

Series 2. Annual School Reports, 1857-1898, 1979-1984 (27 folders in 2 drop front boxes, 1.0 li.ft.) are printed publications of the School Superintending Committee, Board of Education. and School Board. They are arranged in folders in chronological order. There is a complete run from 1887 to 1898 but many gaps in the earlier years. The early reports provide the narrative report prepared for Town Meeting. Later ones include the financial statements for the Schools. School reports were included in some Annual Town Reports (RG 2) . See the container list for exact years available in this collection. Multiple copies are noted in the container list.

Placed with the Annual School Reports in Box #6 is an undated small note paper with pasted news clipping about the opening of school on April 8, no year, naming each teacher and district number and name. It appears to date from the 1890s.

Other printed items in this series in Box 6b include: *The Future of Amherst Schools and Should Amherst, Hollis, Milford, Mont Vernon, Lyndeboro and Wilton form a Cooperative School District?*, 1948; and *Report to be presented to the Amherst NH School District by the Special Multiple Committee ... to investigate and present recommendations on Amherst's long-range School Problem. Also a Report to the Amherst School Board by A special Study Committee...for the purpose of recommending action to be taken for immediate need of providing more space....*, 1953.

Series 3. School Registers, 1869-1871 (8 folders in 1 drop-front box). School registers are preprinted forms provided by the State and completed by the teacher who submitted the information to the School Superintending Committee. They chronicle attendance of students, including names and ages, habits of study, and rank as a scholar. A summary page may provide the teacher's prior experience, and wages (including board). Names of

textbooks and a visitor log are also included. The registers are the only source of information about the names and ages of students in each school. The series contains one full set (all ten districts) for the year 1870/71. The 1869/1870 one is for District 2 only. They are arranged in folders by School District number.

Series 4. School Treasurer's Cash Books, 1919-1935, 1941-1954 (5 bound volumes in 1 letter sized document box, 0.5 li.ft.). The volumes contain partially printed forms with entries in ink. For some years there is a NH State Board of Education Annual Report of District Treasurer form completed by the Treasurer and signed by the auditors that gives a summary of the fiscal year and list of receipts. The volumes are in chronological order. The volume for 1936-1940 was not found in the Town Hall vault.

Language: English

Source: Unknown except for the two printed copies of the Report of the Superintending School Committee which were sent to Amherst from Meriden. Meriden is an unincorporated community in the eastern portion of Plainfield NH. Kimball Union Academy is located there and perhaps was the donor

Subjects:

Amherst	School Districts
Board of Education	School Register
Education	Schools
School Board	Superintending School Committee

Location: Town Hall Vault, Clerk's Office, Town of Amherst, NH

Related archival materials:

RG 1 Town Record Books, Volumes 1 (1760-1791), 2 (1791-1842) and 3 (1821-1847) all contain information. Check index booklets. Microfilm available at the Amherst Public Library.

A financial and / or narrative report for all school districts was printed in the annual town report sporadically from 1840/1841 until fiscal year 1873/1874; from then until the late 1990's the school report often was included in the annual town report. It now is a separate report. See RG 02 Annual Town Reports.

The Amherst Public Library and New Hampshire State Library each have a collection of Annual Town Reports dating from 1832. Some annual town reports are available online at the website of the University of New Hampshire Library at <https://www.library.unh.edu/find/digital/category/nh-cities-towns> and the Internet Archives at www.archive.org (accessed 28 Feb 2017).

Preparer: C.G. Swank, K. Holman, 2017

Container List**Series 1. School Record Books**

Like size volumes have been placed together in one legal -size document box (Box #1) and four small (8.75 x 10.5) drop front boxes. The following list is by district, and chronological. *N.B.* Box and volume #.

Box	Vol #	Title	Date
1	1	School District 1 Records	1806-1852
1	2	School District 1 Records (represents the portion of District 1 that became District 2 in 1838)	1838-1881
2	1	School District 2 Records (became District 7 in 1838)	1812-1850
1	3	School District 3 Records	1817-1876
5	1	School District 3 Records	1877-1880
2	2	School District 4 Records	1808-1855
2	3	School District 4 Records	1855-1881
3	1	School District 6 Records. See also Folder 3/1a containing Memorandum/cash book (Payments, School orders, abatements) 1843-1844	1806-1861
3	2	School District 6 Records	1862-1878
3	3	School District 6 Records	1879-1881
4	1	School District 7 Records	1851-1881
5	2	School District 8 Records	1859-1881
4	2	School District 9 Records	1842-1881
1	4	School District 14 / 10 Records. Spine title <i>Journal</i>	1854-1881
5	3	School District (town-wide) Records	1881-1912
4	3	School District (town-wide) Records	1913-1930
4	4	School District (town-wide) Records	1930-1949

Series 2. School Annual Reports

Two small (8.75 x 10.5) drop front boxes (#6 and #6b). [x number] means there is more than one copy. Different color covers exist for some years.

Box / Folder	Title/ Description	Date
6/1	Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH March 1, 1857	1857
6/2	Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH March 1, 1857 Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH March 1858 <i>Note: Found in Meriden, NH - no additional info</i>	1857, 1858
6/3	Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH for the year ending March 4, 1861 Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH for the year ending March 4, 1864 Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH for	1861, 1864, 1866, 1869

Box / Folder	Title/ Description	Date
	the year ending March 4, 1866 Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH for the year ending March 9, 1869	
6/4	Report of the Superintending School Committee, Amherst, NH for the year ending March 14, 1871 [x2]	1871
6/5	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1882 [x2]	1882
6/6	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1885 [x3]	1885
6/7	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1887 [x3]	1887
6/8	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1888 [x3]	1888
6/9	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1889 [x2 blue, 1 pink]	1889
6/10	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1890 [x3 blue; 1 yellow cover]	1890
6/11	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1891 [x2 green, 1 pink, 1 blue covers]	1891
6/12	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1892 [x3]	1892
6/13	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1893 [x3]	1893
6/14	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1894 [x3 salmon, 1 gray covers]	1894
6/15	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1895 [x3]	1895
6/16	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March, 1896 [x2 pink, 2 blue]	1896
6/17	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1897 [x3]	1897
6/18	Report of the Board of Education of the School District of Amherst for the year ending March 1, 1898 [x3]	1898
6/19	News clipping, n.d. Name of teacher, district number for school beginning April 8. Also handwritten note with district number and name	c. 1895
6b/1	<i>The Future of Amherst Schools and Should Amherst, Hollis, Milford, Mont Vernon, Lyndeboro and Wilton form a Cooperative School District?, 1948</i>	1948
6b/2	<i>Report to be presented to the Amherst NH School District by the Special Multiple Committee ... to investigate and present recommendations on Amherst's long-range School Problem. also a Report to the Amherst School Board by A special Study</i>	1953

Box / Folder	Title/ Description	Date
	<i>Committee...for the purpose of recommending action to be taken for immediate need of providing more space....</i>	
6b/3	Annual Reports of the School District Officers of Amherst, NH for the Year Ending June 30, 1979 [x2]	1978/1979
6b/4	Annual Reports of the School District Officers of Amherst, NH for the Year Ending June 30, 1980 [x2]	1979/1980
6b/5	Annual Reports of the School District Officers of Amherst, NH for the Year Ending June 30, 1981	1980/1981
6b/6	Annual Reports of the School District Officers of Amherst, NH for the Year Ending June 30, 1982	1981/1982
6b/7	Annual Reports of the School District Officers of Amherst, NH for the Year Ending June 30, 1983 [x2]	1982/1983
6b/8	Annual Report Amherst School District 1983/1984 [x2]	1983/1984

Series #3. School Registers

All in small (8.75 x 10.5) drop front box (#7).

Box / Folder	Title/ Description	Date
7/1	New Hampshire School Register of District 1 of Amherst: Senior Department, 1870/71 Summer Term New Hampshire School Register of District 1 of Amherst: Senior Department, 1870/71 Winter Term	1870/1871
7/2	New Hampshire School Register of District 1 of Amherst: Senior Department, 1870/71 Summer Term New Hampshire School Register of District 1 of Amherst: Junior Department, 1870/71 Winter Term	1870/1871
7/3	New Hampshire School Register of District 2 of Amherst: 1869/70 Summer Term New Hampshire School Register of District 2 of Amherst: 1869/70 Winter Term	1869/1870
7/4	New Hampshire School Register of District 2 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer New Hampshire School Register of District 2 of Amherst: 1870/71 Winter	1870/1871
7/5	New Hampshire School Register of District 3 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & First Winter Term New Hampshire School Register of District 3 of Amherst: 1870 /71 Second Winter Term	1870/1871
7/6	New Hampshire School Register of District 4 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer and Winter Terms New Hampshire School Register of District 5 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & Winter Terms	1870/1871

Box / Folder	Title/ Description	Date
	New Hampshire School Register of District 6 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & Winter Terms	
7/7	New Hampshire School Register of District 7 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & Winter Terms New Hampshire School Register of District 8 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & Winter Terms	1870/1871
7/8	New Hampshire School Register of District 9 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & Winter Terms New Hampshire School Register of District 10 of Amherst: 1870/71 Summer & Winter Terms	1870/1871

Series 4. Treasurer's Cash Books

All in letter sized document box

Box	Vol #	Title	Date
8	1	School Treasurer's Cash Book	1919-1929
8	2	Treasurer's Cash Book. Inside Cover - School District	1930-1935
8	3	Treasurer's Cash Book. Inside Cover - School District of Amherst, NH	1941-1946
8	4	Treasurer's Cash Book. Inside Cover - School District of Amherst, NH	1946-1950
8	5	Treasurer's Cash Book. Inside Cover - School District of Amherst, NH	1951-1954