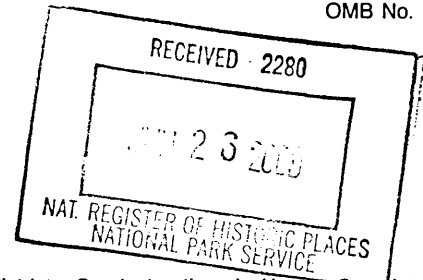


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Brock Hill Schoolhouse

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number North Road  not for publication

city or town Newbury  vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Orange code 017 zip code 05051

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Luzanne C. Gamble National Register Specialist, June 23, 2003  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

8/4/05

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total
	2	

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Educational Resources of Vermont

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls weatherboard

roof wood shingles

other metal

brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1      Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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### Summary

The Brock Hill Schoolhouse is located on the west side of the unpaved North Road 3.5 miles north of the village of West Newbury, Vermont. The schoolhouse is located in a rural setting surrounded by open fields and several apple trees to the west. The quarter-acre site consists of two Greek Revival style buildings; a one-room Schoolhouse reconstructed in 1850 and a combination Woodshed/Privy constructed in 1864. The schoolhouse faces east and sits 26' from the road. The woodshed/privy faces south, is 20' north of the school building and sits only 12' from the road. Both buildings possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The schoolhouse features elements of the simple mid-19 century Greek Revival style that was common for one-room schools in Vermont during the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The featured elements are a front gable roof of medium pitch, a cornice line emphasized with wide undecorated trim boards, and cornice returns in the gable ends. The combination woodshed/privy is a simple vernacular style that compliments the Greek Revival style schoolhouse.

Both buildings were altered only slightly during their history and their interior floor plans respect the original construction. At the schoolhouse, the original entrance door was replaced about 1900 with the current door. During the recent restoration an interior wall of the schoolhouse that had been removed, was rebuilt in the original location. Historic photographs and oral histories of former students were consulted during the restoration in 2001. Both buildings are in excellent condition and currently unused.

### Schoolhouse

The single story, 2 x 2 bay, schoolhouse (20' 6" x 24' 6"), with central entrance on the east gable end, is wood frame construction with wood sills resting on a concrete foundation. During the recent restoration the original unstable fieldstone foundation was replaced with a poured concrete wall foundation. All the rotten structural and exterior wood was replaced with comparable materials. The original, repaired and replaced weatherboard exterior walls are painted white latex. The simple fascia, trim and return cornice on the east and west elevations are wood. On the east elevation there is an unpainted wood panel door (3' x 7') with a large single light. There are plastic drainage pipes laid in crushed stone and earth around the schoolhouse.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2      Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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There are two windows on the south, west and north elevations; all the windows are operable, have 14" x 22" panes, and original non-painted hardware. There are six original two-over-two wood frame sash windows with simple wood sills and trim. The weathered green composition roof shingles were replaced with white cedar shingles on the normal-sloped front-gabled roof. The central brick chimney is original and there is a wooden flagpole on the east elevation. A rotten wood step on the east elevation was replaced with a concrete step.

The original interior bead board (2.5") walls and ceiling were repaired with comparable materials. The existing colors of the walls and ceiling were matched with latex paint. The walls above the chair rails (3' 4" from the floor) are painted dark red, the walls below the chair rails are not painted, and the ceiling is painted blue. The simple baseboards, chair rails, and window trim are painted blue. The original wood floorboards (3' 6" to 7' 6") are coated with polyurethane. An original interior wall, that separated the classroom from the coatroom, had been removed. A new interior wall was built floor to ceiling with bead board, chair rail and baseboard, and a 3' opening was left opposite the front door. Reproduction coat hooks are installed in the coatroom (3' 6" wide).

The interior of the schoolhouse is not decorated and is furnished with only a single wood stove. During the restoration, a "Coral Parlor Cook" cast iron stove was placed in the center of the floor under a steel stovepipe leading to the brick chimney. The wood stove, manufactured by Perry & Co. of Albany, New York, is dated 1876 and also has a patent date of 1875. The stove was cleaned and refinished with stove polish. The building has a new electric meter connected underground to a telephone pole along the road, however the schoolhouse is not wired at this time.

### Woodshed/Privy

The post and beam frame single story building (17'6" x 16'8" overall) was built as a woodshed and has two attached nearly identical privies (4'3" x 6'8") on the north elevation. The front elevation of the gable-roofed woodshed faces south, sits 20' north of the schoolhouse and only 12' from the dirt and gravel road. The original fieldstone foundation was restored and all the rotten wood was replaced with comparable materials. Mortises in the large beams (12" x 14") of

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Section Number 7 Page 3      Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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the woodshed indicate that the frame was used in an earlier construction and reassembled. The original weatherboard exterior walls are painted white latex. The simple fascia, trim, windowsills and frames are wood. There are small window openings with no sash in each of the attached privies and an opening enclosed with a solid wood panel in the gable end of the north façade. There are two original solid wood doors on the south elevation; a door on the right leads to the woodshed and a door on the left leads to a hallway (3'1" x 12') and the attached privy. The roof plan is a front gable with three shed roof additions. The existing standing-seam steel roof, that covers the entire building, was repainted black during the restoration in 2001.

The interior of the woodshed is a large room (11'5" x 14'1") used for the storage of firewood and provides access through a solid wood door to an attached three-seat privy. An additional three-seat privy is accessed through the attached hallway on the west elevation. The interior is exposed wood framing with no wall coverings. The building has a new electric meter connected underground to a telephone pole along the road, however the building is not wired at this time.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1850-1913

**Significant Dates**

1850

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 1 Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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### Summary

The Brock Hill Schoolhouse, a rural one-room school that was rebuilt in 1850, is significant as an example of the common school tradition in Vermont and as a good example of the Greek Revival style of architecture. It is being nominated under the multiple property listing, "Educational Resources of Vermont" and meets the registration requirements for the school property type<sup>1</sup>.

Surviving town records and local history indicate that a school served the farm families near Brock Hill in Newbury between 1802 and 1818. The Brock Hill Schoolhouse was rebuilt in 1850 and functioned as a common school in District No. 8 until the summer session of 1913. The Brock Hill Schoolhouse is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A as an intact physical example of Vermont's common school tradition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The schoolhouse is also significant under Criterion C because the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Greek Revival style of architecture that was popular throughout Vermont in the first half of the nineteenth century.

### Early Education in Vermont

The 1777 constitution of the Republic of Vermont was the first constitution in what was to become the United States to include a provision for education. The legislature worked out a series of provisions regarding the general financing and supervision of common and secondary schools, including the general school law of 1782 that provided for the division of towns into districts and a system of local supervision and taxation. Localized education, or "the district system" as it was popularly known at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was a standard innovation. Vermont town meetings gradually divided their towns into educational districts and charged each with building a schoolhouse, employing a teacher, and buying supplies.<sup>2</sup>

By the time Vermont achieved statehood in 1791, an educational framework had already been established, and a system of local control was firmly in place. Education was thus an important priority for Vermont's first settlers and from the beginning education in Vermont was largely a local matter. While the state provided the legal framework, local

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 2 Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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initiative was primarily responsible for making the system a reality. Typically, as soon as a community was populous enough, a common school was established, a schoolhouse built and a teacher hired. Schools and churches were often the first civic buildings erected in a community. Money for building and maintaining the school and the teacher's salary was variously financed by subscription, lottery, revenues from the rental of the school "lease lands" set aside in each town, and a system of school taxation. Generally arranged as a "tax upon the scholar", the costs of fuel and board fell on families in direct proportion to the number of children they had attending school that term.

The earliest common schools were typically small, crude, temporary structures built of logs. The schoolhouse was placed in as central a location as possible within the township or school district. Since people were reluctant to waste good farmland on a school lot, the early school sites were often located on the least desirable land in wooded or swampy areas with little or no yard space. However, as towns grew in population and their financial resources increased, larger and more permanent structures were built.

In the first half of the 1800s, as towns became well established, many of the early school buildings were replaced with more permanent, distinctly civic structures. New England educators began publishing books on the design of schoolhouses, such as William A. Alcott's Essay on the Construction of Schoolhouses (1832), and Henry Barnard's School Architecture (1838). Some authors, such as Barnard, likened schools to temples, an analogy that conformed easily to the Greek Revival architectural style popular at the time.<sup>3</sup>

Along with reforms in schoolhouse construction were gradual reforms in instruction. The examination and licensing of teachers was begun in 1827, but was repealed in 1833. In 1845, the examination of teachers and superintendents became state law and the Society for the Improvement of the Common School was formed. The Vermont Board of Education was established to oversee the school system in 1856. J. S. Adams, the third secretary of the State Board of Education, wrote the following summary of existing school laws concerning school curriculum in his annual report in 1857: "The general law . . . (provides) for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history of the United States, and good behavior".<sup>4</sup>



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Section Number 8 Page 3 Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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Other educational institutions were established to augment the local school system. Libraries had been established as early as the 1790s in some towns, and at least twelve circulating libraries had been established by 1810. By 1853 there were 95 private libraries in Vermont, including those located in schools.<sup>5</sup>

The period 1840-60 saw the most substantial increase in the number of schools in Vermont to date. According to Lewis Stillwell, "Between the years of 1840-1850 the whole state was going in for education more than ever before. During these years 300 new schools were opened and 10,000 new pupils were added to the system".

By 1860 the growth of educational institutions began to level off. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed marked progress in educational legislation and reform, as well as in the development of more specialized kinds of education in agriculture, teacher training and children with special needs. In 1864 the school tax was lifted from pupils, thereby making education entirely free for the first time. In 1867 Vermont became the second state in the United States to establish a compulsory attendance law requiring children between eight and fourteen years of age to attend school for a minimum of three months annually.

In 1874 the State Superintendent replaced the Board of Education, and county and town superintendents were appointed to inspect and report on schools. These inspections exposed many deficiencies in the system such as problems with the curriculum, unskilled teachers, and schoolhouse conditions. Towards the end of the century, and into the 20<sup>th</sup>, a number of these problems were addressed, in part through a gradual centralization of the Vermont public school system.

Beginning in the 1880s agitation concerning the age-old system of district control began and educational reformers started fighting for town control to lessen the number of small, poorly run schools in the more remote districts. The controversial move towards consolidation, or unionization, was realized in 1892 when a state law was passed making the town the basic unit of control. One result of the various reforms of this period was the building of new schools, or the enlarging and remodeling of existing ones.

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Section Number 8 Page 4 Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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Alongside financial and administrative reforms, increased attention was being paid to the actual physical environment of the schools. In 1904 the State Board of Health began to set standards for the sanitation, ventilation, and lighting of public schools, which led to the installation of banks of windows in older schoolhouses for better lighting as well as better plumbing and ventilation.<sup>6</sup>

From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 1900s, most teachers in the United States taught in one-room, rural schools. In 1900 there were 1,571 one-room schools in Vermont and by 1914 the number had decreased to 1,307.<sup>7</sup> Common school teaching in Vermont began as a male occupation. It became sexually integrated at the turn of the nineteenth century, and by mid-century most teachers were women. Thereafter, teaching was woman's work in the sense that they predominated numerically. Women quickly won the right to teach, at least in the summer term when the larger boys did not attend school.<sup>8</sup> In Ryegate, a town immediately north of Newbury, Abigail Whitelaw began teaching as early as 1802 and set a precedent for female teachers in the common school tradition.<sup>9</sup> The historian Margaret K. Nelson believed that "school teaching probably served the function of displaying marriageable girls. School teaching, Nelson said, had specific characteristics, male control over working conditions and community control over living conditions, which allowed it to coexist peacefully with local definitions of appropriate behavior for young women".<sup>10</sup> The common schoolmistresses were predominately young, unmarried daughters of respectable farmers "drawn from the bright young people of the neighborhood".<sup>11</sup>

### One Room Schools in Vermont

The district school system was established in 1782 and abolished in 1892 when towns were made the basic unit of control. However, many one-room district schools continued to operate well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The most common district school was the one-room schoolhouse. One-room schools were built in Vermont from the late 1700s until the 1940s and can be found throughout the state. Most of the surviving one-room schools remain in rural rather than urban areas. With the construction of centralized schools at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of new one-room schools decreased. Today, very few one-room schools are still in educational use and they typically accommodate only one or two grade levels.

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Section Number 8 Page 5 Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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The size of one-room school lots was typically quite small, one quarter acre or less.<sup>12</sup> Often they had only enough land around the schoolhouse to accommodate the privy, woodshed or woodpile, and possibly a well. These schools were generally built in wood of post and beam construction or balloon framing, and sheathed in clapboards. Many were very simple buildings, with little stylistic detail, probably to keep costs down. Most one-room schools are rectangular in shape with gable roofs and 1 or 1 ½ stories in height and woodsheds were usually attached. In some schools the classroom is entered from a coatroom or “mudroom”. After the mid 1800s, many schools had wainscoting and were heated with wood stoves. School desks and/or benches often were built in or attached to the floor and blackboards (either painted wood or slate) were attached to the walls. As populations increased, many schoolhouses received additional furnishings and additional rooms. Privies generally were detached and most have disappeared over time.

Few one-room schools survive in their original use and fewer survive in their original condition. Most one-room schools have been transferred to private owners and adaptively used for other purposes. Because many school buildings were on land leased from farmers and the land reverted back to its owner after the school was no longer in use, some school buildings are used for farm storage and others have been converted to housing.<sup>13</sup>

### Public education in Newbury

Newbury, Vermont was founded in 1763 and occupies the northeasterly corner of Orange County. The first recorded action regarding public education in Newbury was taken at the Town Meeting of March 12, 1769 when fifteen pounds was voted for support of a school. The first school was held in private homes and in the log meetinghouse. For several years there was only one school in the town. On November 15, 1781, the subscribers promised to pay seven pounds, four shillings, in hard money, provided the schoolmaster teach school for three months. Newbury was divided into four school districts in 1782 and by 1818 there were sixteen districts with 603 children between the ages of four and eighteen.<sup>14</sup>

By 1857 schools were maintained in twenty-one districts in Newbury. Each district built and owned its own schoolhouse, raised and collected its own taxes and had its own board of officers. The district schoolhouse was occasionally the local meeting place for singing and spelling schools, prayer and class meetings, lawsuits, justice trials, lyceums and lectures. There were two school terms, winter and summer of ten or twelve weeks each and it was not until about 1882 that the rural districts had a fall term. Newbury's

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Section Number 8 Page 6 Brock Hill Schoolhouse, Newbury, Orange County, Vermont

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historian Frederick P. Wells observed, "It is easy to ridicule them, and the old systems of teaching, but there were other lessons taught than from books. In them were learned the lessons of self-denial, of fortitude, of the value of time, of honesty, of individual responsibility, and out of them came men and women who have been an honor to our town".<sup>15</sup> Pupils, who desired to prepare for college, or to study what are today considered high school subjects, could attend Newbury Seminary that was established by the Methodist Conference in 1838 and operated until 1868.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1880 –1881 school year Newbury School Superintendent E. J. Ranslow reported twenty-one school districts and twenty common schools with 520 students of which 514 were between the ages of 5 and 20. The average weekly cost of schools for teacher's wages, including board, and for fuel and supplies was \$ 6.36. There were 11 male teachers with an average weekly wage of \$ 7.71 and 32 female teachers with an average weekly wage of \$ 4.68. The average number of weeks of school per year was 29.7.<sup>17</sup>

In 1892 the Vermont Legislature abolished the district school system and all public schools were combined under a town committee of three members. Newbury Village established a High School in 1893.<sup>18</sup> At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, prosperous villages and farms contributed to the growth of Newbury along the Connecticut River.

### The Thomas R. Brock Farm

The Brock Hill Schoolhouse is located on the original property of the Thomas R. Brock Farm on the North Road in Newbury. Deacon Thomas Brock (c. 1745-1811) of Newbury was first recorded in a marriage to Judith Abbott of Haverhill, New Hampshire in 1772. He served in the Revolutionary War and settled on Hall's Meadow in a house he constructed in 1800. Their first son of fifteen children was Thomas Robinson Brock (1775-1839). About 1802 Thomas R. Brock built a farm on the North Road near Brock Hill and married Rebecca Abbott of Concord, New Hampshire in 1803. Thomas and Rebecca raised nine children on the Brock Farm. In 1822, the farm was deeded to Thomas's younger brother, Ethan S. Brock.

Thomas R. Brock's brother Ethan S. Brock (1794-1870) was the youngest of Deacon Brock's fifteen children. Ethan S. Brock married Mary Doyle and they lived on the farm until 1867 and then relocated to the nearby village of West Newbury. Ethan and Mary had no children when Ethan died in 1870. In 1867 Ethan deeded the farm to his brother

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Jacob (1784 or 85 -1868 or 70) who had four marriages and fifteen children. Jacob Brock passed the farm to his youngest son, Carlos E. Brock (1839-1909). Carlos married Mary Jane Bailey (? – 1916) in 1861 and they had four children. Their last son, Ernest F. (1878-1943) was born on this farm and he married Olive Knight in 1898. Ernest F. and Olive Brock had three children; Erle F. (1899 – 1918), Carl (1900 - ?) and Thelma Mae (1906 - ?).<sup>19 20</sup> The farm passed out of the Brock family in 1960.

Most of the hills in Newbury are named for local families: Brock, Chamberlain, Leighton, Melvin, Moore, Wallace and White hills, and Tucker Mountain. Most of these families operated small farms. In the 1880s the Brocks and Tuckers were particularly noted for the Morgan horses they raised.<sup>21</sup>

### The Brock Hill Schoolhouse

The first schoolhouse in District No. 8, in the western part of Newbury, was built sometime between 1802 and 1818. The first schoolhouse was probably a simple log or wood frame building. By 1818, forty-five students or “scholars” from the surrounding farms were attending the Brock School.<sup>22</sup> The schoolhouse acquired this name either because it was built near the Thomas R. Brock Farm or because the schoolhouse was built less than a mile north of Brock Hill.

District school minutes from 1840 and 1841 record a three month winter session and a three month summer session and voted “to find board and food in proportion to the number of scholars (students) each (family) sends”. In April the board members voted to “move the schoolhouse to the center of the most convenient place near the center between Joseph Chamberlin’s and Harvey Westgate’s.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the Brock Hill Schoolhouse was moved to accommodate new students to a location near the Ethan S. Brock Farm (formerly T. R. Brock Farm) north of the small village of West Newbury.

The schoolhouse provided a place for the formal education of children from the surrounding rural upland farms. Later, in 1850, the Brock Hill Schoolhouse was reconstructed to replace the earlier school building.<sup>24</sup>

On April 2, 1850, the board established a committee of three to “examin the House for repairs” and requested a report by September. The board met twice in September and twice in October to discuss the necessary repairs; they voted “good eighteen inch Hemlock shingles to cover the roof”, “House clapboarded with Spruce clapboards”, “4

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(four) 20 (?) light windows, 2 on the north and 2 on the south”, “finish or near like the School House at the lower end of the Town”, “Plaster a new”, “add additional studding”, “a double Floor, the upper Floor to be good Spruce Boards”, “good stout Doors”, and also voted to have the “Chimney moved”. At the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting the board also voted to accept “E. S. Brock’s proposal for the land where the school house stands”. On November 19, 1850, the board voted “to raise 99 Dollars to pay for repairing the School House and six Dollars for the use of the land the School House stands on, and money to buy stove pipe”.<sup>25</sup>

In a lease recorded in October 1850, Ethan S. Brock agreed to let the School District No. 8 “move the School House back six feet into my field, from where it now stands and move the Shedpound to the North East corner of said House”. In exchange for the privilege of relocating the schoolhouse on his property, the District agreed to build “two lengths of fence” to meet Ethan’s fence on the road and pay him six dollars for the use of the land. Ethan Brock also agreed to keep the fence in repair after it was built.<sup>26</sup>

The schoolhouse appears on the E. (Ethan) S. Brock Farm on the Walling map of 1858. At this time the map records 275 schools, 381 teachers and 9212 pupils in Orange County.<sup>27</sup>

The schoolhouse rebuilding in 1850 features the simple elements of the Greek Revival style of architecture that was typical of one-room schools in Vermont during the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The schoolhouse served District No. 8 for the local school board and continued to operate from the rebuilding in 1850 until the summer session in 1913.

In response to the annual Vermont School Register questionnaire, the teachers in District No. 8 reported, in the April 1860 through March 1861 period, that there were 22 scholars between 4 and 18 years of age. In the second term there were 5 scholars between the ages of 18 and 20. There were two female teachers and they were paid 45 Dollars for 2 twelve-week terms. The scholar’s study included Reading, Spelling, Penmanship, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Composition and History. At this time the school had no bell, globe, clock, thermometer, maps or reference books. In the second session they did report having a blackboard. The condition of the school was reported as “good” by one teacher and “not very good” by the other teacher. Joseph A. Chamberlin, Clerk of

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District No. 8, estimated the value at \$200 for the School House (20' X 24') and the ¼ acre lot.<sup>28</sup>

The School Report of 1860-1861 recorded that in District No. 8, "There is some very good scholarship here. The best class in town in written arithmetic is to be found here. Some are very good in grammar."<sup>29</sup>

On April 5, 1864 the school board accepted Moses Brock Jr.'s plan "to Build a Shed 12 by 14 feet". The existing Woodshed (12' x 14'), with two Privy additions on the north elevation, was built from previously used posts and beams. This building is just 20' north of the schoolhouse and is a contributing resource to the significance of the site.<sup>30</sup> The schoolhouse also appears as the District No. 8 school on the C. (Carlos E.) Brock Farm in the Beers Atlas published in 1877.<sup>31</sup>

The Brock Hill School had only about a dozen students in the last few years of operation and it closed finally after the summer session of 1913.<sup>32</sup> In the next school session the students were relocated to the public school in the village of West Newbury. The closing of the Brock Hill School is an example of the consolidation effort in Vermont in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Greek Revival style

The Brock Hill Schoolhouse features the simple elements of the Greek Revival style of architecture that was typical for many one-room schools during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in Vermont. The building features elements that define the style: a front gable roof, a cornice line emphasized with wide undecorated trim boards, and cornice returns in the gable ends.

Many schoolhouses bear the imprint of an architect, even though in most cases it came via long distance, transmitted by an architectural handbook or plan book rather than obtained from a specially retained architect. Plan books played a significant role in shaping many Vermont buildings during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through these books, carpenters and other builders anywhere in the country made architectural designs easily available for replication; they included sketches and elevation drawings as well as floor plans.<sup>33</sup>

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The form of country schools followed their function, relying on small utilitarian designs built with inexpensive materials to shelter isolated, small groups of children brought together to get an education. A distinguishing mark of this building type is that its function has come to be readily recognizable by its form. Although a few country schools might be mistaken for rural churches or farm outbuildings, most can be quickly identified for what they are, or once were. The vast majority of one-room country schools were rectangular, while some were square. The pivotal determinant of, and limitation on, the form of these schoolhouses was the carrying distance of the human voice; the teacher's to keep order, the students' to be heard by the teacher. Even before the plan-book architects and educators quantified the optimum size for country schools, vernacular builders intuitively were constructing schools to the maximum feasible size of no more than 30 by 40 feet. For the Greek Revival buildings so popular with Vermonters during the 1830s and 1840s, white was the color of choice, not red, as a popular myth would have it. Outhouse or privy design varied from simple to ornate and virtually all were built of wood. The schoolyard was generally grass, and was well trodden in the areas where the children played games and along paths to the woodshed or privies.

Interiors of one-room schools varied from district to district. The quality and quantity of furnishings depended on the parents of the district and their financial commitment to education. Floors were generally hardwood with the walls painted white or cream. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century schools featured dark wainscoting approximately 4 ½ feet up from the floor or just beneath the windows. Windows consisted of simple sash without decorative millwork. The Brock Hill Schoolhouse reflects the simple construction details that were common for rural schools of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in Vermont. Like the buildings themselves, furnishings and interior appointments remained eclectic until the push for standardization and major rural school reforms.<sup>34</sup>

The grounds for complaint about Vermont schoolhouses in the late 1840s fell into five main categories: location, privies, temperature and ventilation, seats and apparatus. The New England movement for schoolhouse reform probably did not influence the decision to remodel the Brock Hill Schoolhouse in 1850.<sup>35</sup> The earlier schoolhouse, built sometime between 1802 and 1818, was probably in disrepair and was remodeled to reflect the popular Greek Revival style for buildings during this period in Newbury.



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### The significance of the Brock Hill Schoolhouse.

The schoolhouse is individually eligible for the National Register for its association with the broad patterns of the history of education in Vermont. It is also significant as a survivor of the distinctive Greek Revival style of schoolhouse architecture. Schools are reflective of Vermont's long history of education and its trends. From the date of the first Brock Hill Schoolhouse, sometime between 1802 and 1818, until the present schoolhouse closed in 1913, the school also played significant roles in the community because as various times it may have been used for other public functions, such as dances, suppers, temperance meetings, lectures, religious services, and club meetings.

Vermont's historic schools were built in response both to the concerns of townspeople in providing an education for their children and to governmental and legislative mandates. District schools also are clear indicators of district population growth and decline, the economic state of the district when the school was built, what the district residents felt about local education, and what they were willing to support financially. District schools served well-defined social purposes as well as educational ones. Although very few remain in use today, the country schoolhouse continues to be a powerful cultural symbol for many Vermonters. The restored Brock Hill Schoolhouse is a recognizable landmark on the North Road in Newbury and is now a symbol of local heritage.

The Brock Hill Schoolhouse also reflects the architectural trends and building traditions of the mid 1800s; a distinctively civic looking school built in the Greek Revival style. It reflects both the influence of books published by New England educators on schoolhouse design and the establishment in many towns of a sound local economy, which could afford schools that would be a source of local pride. The architectural characteristics, including scale, materials, and style, as well as its still-rural setting contribute to its significance. It was constructed in the popular Greek Revival style and is important physical evidence of the development of Vermont's architectural heritage.<sup>36 37 38</sup>

### After the school closed in 1913

After the schoolhouse closed in 1913, it remained part of the Brock Farm and its use is unknown. In 1960 it was deeded out of the Brock Family and the Newbury school district transferred the schoolhouse to Raymond and Estelle Blake. Later the Urquhart family acquired the historic Brock Farm and modified the schoolhouse with the addition of electricity, plumbing and a woodstove. According to oral history the old schoolhouse was used occasionally during the 1970s and 1980s as a hunting lodge.

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George Grove purchased the historic Brock Farm in 1999 from the Rebecca A. Urquhart and The James E. Artis Residuary Trust. The School Board officially transferred the Brock Hill Schoolhouse, with woodshed/privy, to George Grove in June 2000. Mr. Grove and a crew began restoration work on both buildings in the summer of 2000. The current 196-acre farm is protected by a conservation easement with the Upper Valley Land Trust. The easement includes a special provision for the protection of the historic schoolhouse. The Upper Valley Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization working to conserve farmland, forests, wetlands, recreational and scenic areas and other natural resources.<sup>39</sup>

Relying primarily on historic photographs, as well as oral history of a former student and descendants of former teachers and students, the schoolhouse and the woodshed/privy were restored in 2001 to their historic appearances. Both buildings are in excellent condition and currently unused. The restoration was completed in the summer of 2001 and a grand opening ceremony with an informal gathering of Newbury residents was held on October 14, 2001.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbertson, Elsa and Susannah C. Zirblis. "Educational Resources of Vermont: Multiple Property Documentation Form for the historic context, Education in Vermont, 1777 to 1943", Vermont State Historic Preservation Office, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> See "Schoolhouses" in John R. Stilgoe. Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845, Pp. 241-251.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent discussion of this topic see, "The Architecture of Country Schools" in Andrew Gulliford, America's Country Schools, p. 167. The University of Vermont has the 1849 edition of Henry Barnard's School Architecture.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Jody Kenny. "'The Vermont Schoolmarm and the Contemporary One-room Schoolhouse", p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Stillwell, Lewis. Migration from Vermont. 1948.

<sup>7</sup> Kenny, Jody. "The Vermont Schoolmarm and the Contemporary One-room Schoolhouse", p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Nelson, Margaret. "Vermont Female Schoolteachers in the Nineteenth Century", Vermont History, Vol. 49, No. 1, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, Edward and Frederick P. Wells. History of Ryegate, Vermont, p. 156.

<sup>10</sup> Nelson, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Nelson, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Gilbertson, Elsa, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Gilbertson, Elsa, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Wells, Frederick. History of Newbury, VT, 1704-1902, p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> Wells, p. 205.

<sup>16</sup> Kjellerup, Hope Rogers. Newbury, Vermont Celebrates 200 Years, 1763 – 1963, p. 26.

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<sup>17</sup> Vermont State Superintendent of Education. The 27<sup>th</sup> Vermont School Report, October 1882, pp. 84-85.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See the early Brock family genealogy in Frederick P. Wells. History of Newbury, VT, 1704-1902. p. 473-478.

<sup>20</sup> See the later Brock family genealogy in History of Newbury, Vermont, 1900-1977, pp. 439-440.

<sup>21</sup> Swift, Esther Munroe. Vermont Place Names: Footprints of History, p. 313.

<sup>22</sup> The T. R. Brock Farm was started about 1802. Newbury's historian Frederick Wells recorded sixteen districts in Newbury by 1818. The first Brock School was begun during this period. Wells, p. 203.

<sup>23</sup> District School No. 8, Minutes, November 27, 1840, March 12, 1841 and April 20, 1841. Newbury Town Clerk's Vault.

<sup>24</sup> School Record Book, 1840-1882. Town Records Vault, Newbury Town Hall.

<sup>25</sup> District School No. 8, Minutes, September 16 and 25; October 2 and 4; November 19, 1850. Newbury Town Clerk's Vault.

<sup>26</sup> Lease, Newbury Town Records, Book 15, Page 516, October 2, 1850.

<sup>27</sup> Walling, H. F. Map of Orange County, Vermont. 1858.

<sup>28</sup> Vermont School Register for 1860-1861, District No. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Kjellerup, Hope Rogers. 202 Years on a Vermont Hilltop: 1774-1974, p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> District School No. 8, Minutes, April 5, 1864. Newbury Town Clerk's Vault.

<sup>31</sup> Beers, F. W. Atlas of the County of Orange, Vermont, 1877.

<sup>32</sup> School Attendance Register, 1913.

<sup>33</sup> See "The Architecture of Country Schools" in Andrew Guilliford. America's Country Schools. Pp. 164-171.

<sup>34</sup> See "The Form of Schoolhouses", in America's Country Schools. Pp. 171-182.

<sup>35</sup> For an comprehensive discussion of schoolhouse reform in New England see Rebecca R. Noel's "Schooling the Body: The Intersection of Educational and Medical Reform in New England, 1800-1860" Ph.D. diss. Boston University, 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Davis, Janet. "Town of Newbury, VT: Historic Sites & Structures Survey", 1978.

<sup>37</sup> "Educational Resources", Historic Sites and Structures Survey, SHPO, 1993.

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of surviving one and two room schools in Vermont in 1975, see the Association of Retired Teachers of Vermont, School Bells Among Green Hills, p. 106.

<sup>39</sup> "Newbury Landowner Looks to the Future By Honoring the History of his Land" Community Lands, newsletter of the Upper Valley Land Trust, Vol. 14. No. 1., Winter 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Journal Opinion. October 21, 2001.

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### Verbal Boundary Description:

The property is a square parcel measuring 100 x 100 feet, whose northeast corner begins at the telephone pole located 8' 9" from the Woodshed/Privy. The parcel is ¼ acre.

### Boundary Justification:

The property is a small (1/4 acre) parcel that encompasses all of the significant resources. The boundary includes all the land historically associated with the property.

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Photograph Labels: the following information applies to all photographs.

Brock Hill Schoolhouse  
Newbury, Orange County, Vermont  
Photographer: John P. Johnson  
Date: February 27, 2002  
Negative Filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph 1  
Schoolhouse (left) and Woodshed/Privy (right) in landscape; view looking north

Photograph 2  
Schoolhouse (right) and Woodshed/Privy (left) in landscape, view looking south

Photograph 3  
Schoolhouse, exterior details; view looking north

Photograph 4  
Woodshed/Privy, exterior details; view looking north

Photograph 5  
Schoolhouse, interior view of woodstove; view looking north

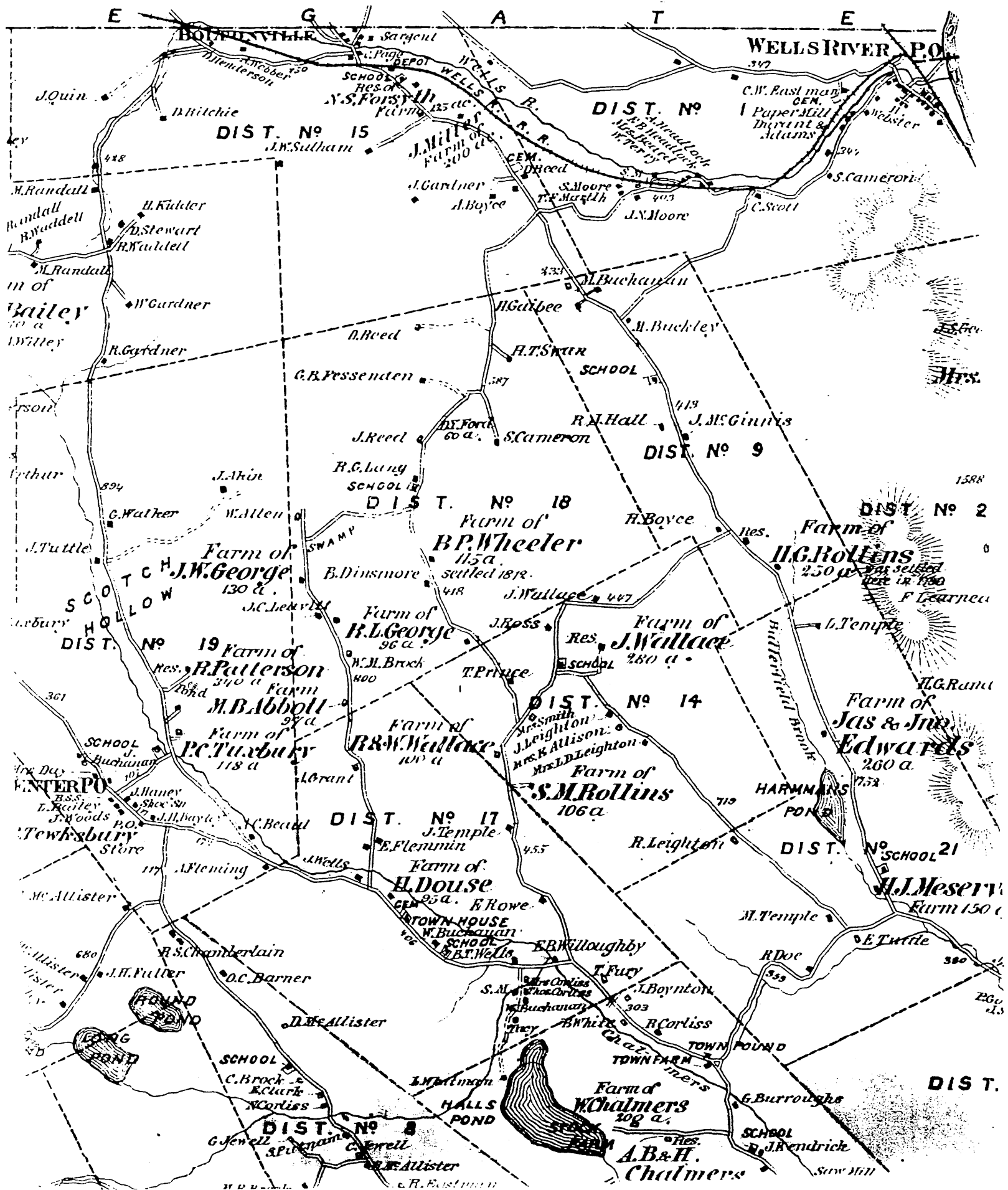
Photograph 6  
Woodshed/Privy, interior view from woodshed into privy; view looking north

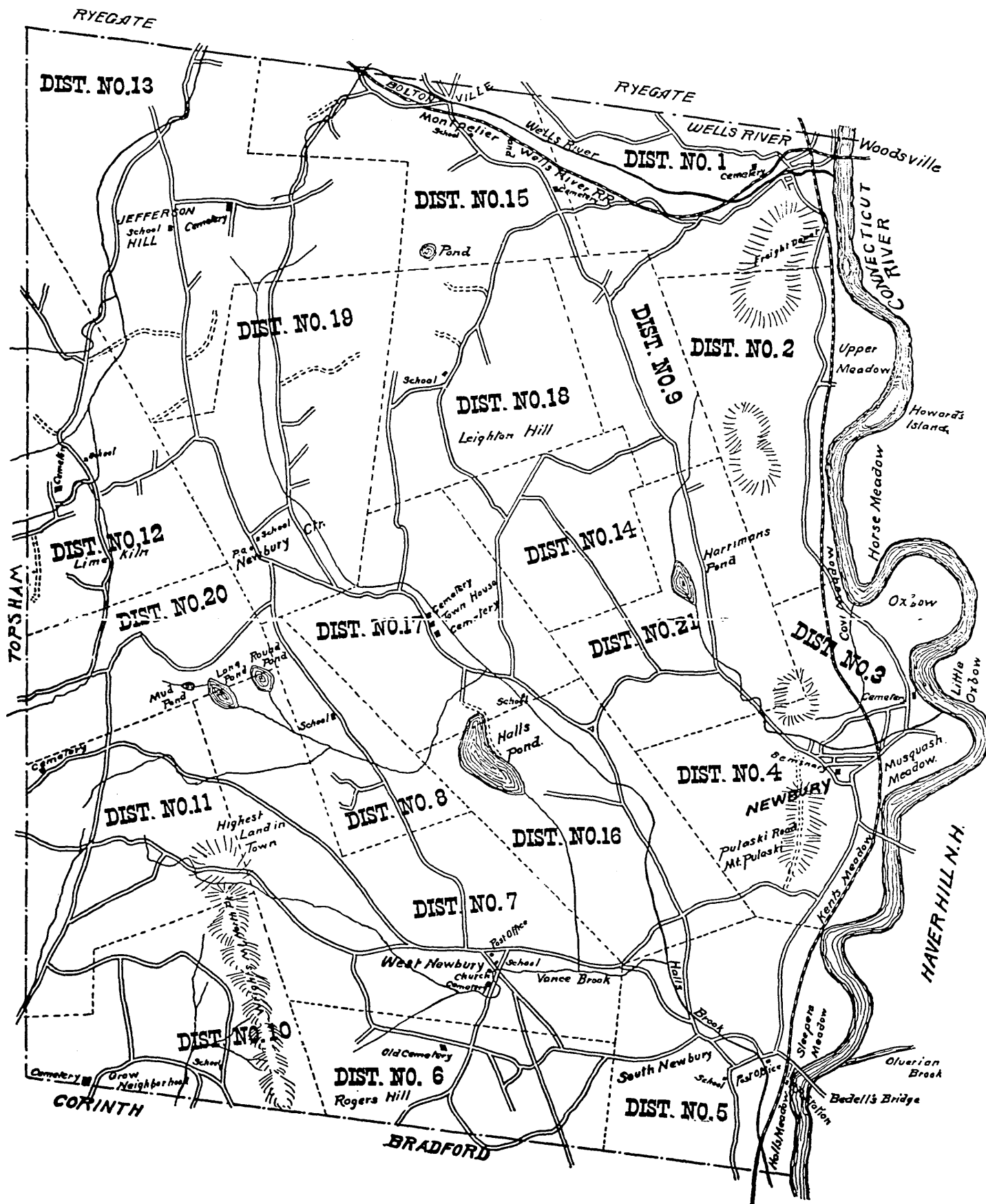


# NEWBURY

BEERS, 1877

Scale 200 Feet to the inch





Map of Newbury, showing the lines of old school districts in 1888

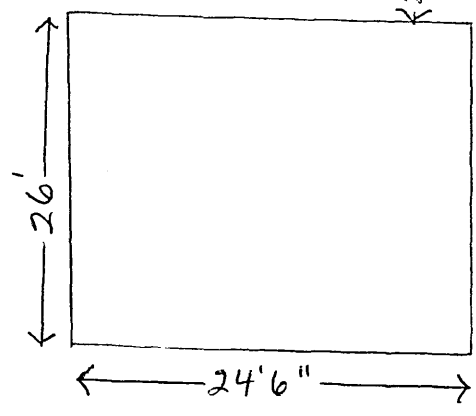
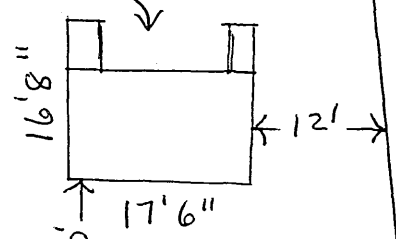
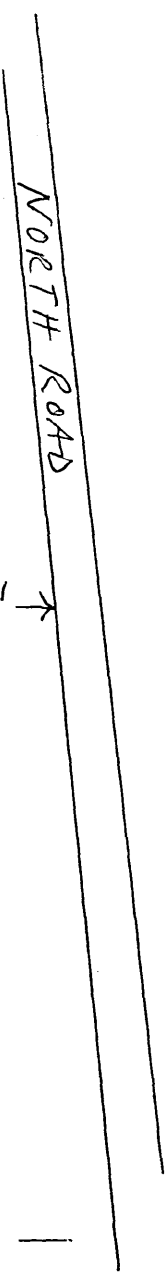


Brock Hill Schoolhouse  
Newbury, Orange, Vermont  
Site Plan

1/4 ACRE ±

SCHOOLHOUSE

WOODSHED/  
PRIVY



NOT TO SCALE