

HEBRON ACADEMY Semester



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Building a Legacy: Owner, Architect, Contractor



Building a Legacy

The Owner

by Jennifer F. Adams

In 1884, student George Morton hoisted a turned wooden bar to his shoulder and carried it over the hills to Hebron from his home in Paris. Placed on a stand near the Academy building and used for gymnastic exercises, this wooden bar became the school's first piece of athletic equipment. Or so the story goes. In George Morton's time, the campus proper consisted only of the Academy building and chapel, both near the current site of the School Building and Treat Science Building. The two buildings faced the sunrise, perched on the northern slope of "the bog" and surrounded by open fields and stone walls. To the east, along the road to Buckfield, were Trustee House and the Old Brick. The school was growing, however, and new principal William Sargent presided over an expansion of land and buildings that still defines Hebron Academy today.



Horizontal bar. The entire campus, circa 1886, showing the east-facing Academy building and chapel. The famous horizontal bar can be seen at the extreme left. The school was growing and desperately needed larger facilities for instruction and recreation.

The first building boom

When William Sargent came to Hebron Academy in 1885, he found a school small in size but large in spirit. Well over 100 students attended classes in the Academy building and chapel, boarding in houses around the town. They made their own entertainment by holding “sociables” and lyceums. Recreation through sport was informal at best, and limited to occasional “base ball” games against town teams. With only two recitation rooms available in the Academy, teachers and students alike felt the pinch of too little space for their classes; some were even held at the boarding houses, whose enterprising owners had set space aside for the purpose.

The young principal’s first priority was to raise funds for a new Academy building. By April 1888, the *Semester* reported that only \$3,135 of the needed \$40,000 cost remained, but “not a brick will be laid until the whole sum is secured.” The new building was to face south, permanently reorienting the campus, which was also about to get much larger.

In 1889, Edward Dunham, trustee and descendant of founder William Barrows, donated land encompassing “the bog” and the northern slope above it, providing a “play ground” for organized athletics. “Through the generous gift of Mr. Edward S. Dunham, the Trustees have acquired title to the bog, so called, together with the land lying between it and the base-ball ground, west of the Trustee House. It is expected also that the campus will be enlarged by the purchase of land on the west of the present grounds. It is the design of the Trustees to remove the stone walls and bushes, to drain the swamp where for generations the complaisant bullfrog has enjoyed much unrestrained freedom, to grade that and the sloping grounds about it, and thus furnish the students with an ample and spacious campus and play ground, extending from the common in front of the church away round to the South Paris road. When this is done and Arbor Day has been suitably observed by adorning the grounds with elms and maples, no academy building in New

England will be more beautifully located or surrounded.” (*Semester*, November 1888.)

At the same time, the Trustees bought a parcel of land across the South Paris road and built a house for the principal, which “commands a full view of the Trustee House, new Academy Building, and the enlarged campus.”

Once Sturtevant Hall was complete, the old Academy building was torn down and the chapel turned on its foundation. A bequest from Josiah Cook enabled the trustees to remodel the old chapel, converting it into the school’s first gymnasium. The large addition and full foundation provided space for music rooms, a meeting room, a baseball cage and bathing facilities for both boys and girls.

Team associations

By 1893, the campus stretched from the former bog north to Sturtevant Hall’s knoll, bordered on the east and south by the Buckfield and South Paris roads. The level field provided for team sports and the students took full advantage.

Because athletics were not yet a formal part of the school's program, students formed associations to support the teams. Among other school organizations, The November 1893 *Semester* listed the Hebron Academy Foot-Ball Association, the Hebron Academy Athletic Association (what we call track and field today) and the Hebron Academy Base-Ball Association. An editorial in the same issue urged all students to join the various associations, saying "It is customary everywhere for those who do not play to pay largely toward the expenses of the different teams."

Meanwhile, campus facilities continued to grow, and by 1910 two dormitories—Atwood Hall to the east and Sturtevant Home to the west—flanked the field.

Twentieth century opens

The playing field acquired a formal name in 1921, when the trustees voted to honor Harold T. Andrews 1914, the first Maine

man and Hebron alumnus to die in the Great War (see page 32 for more about Harold Andrews).

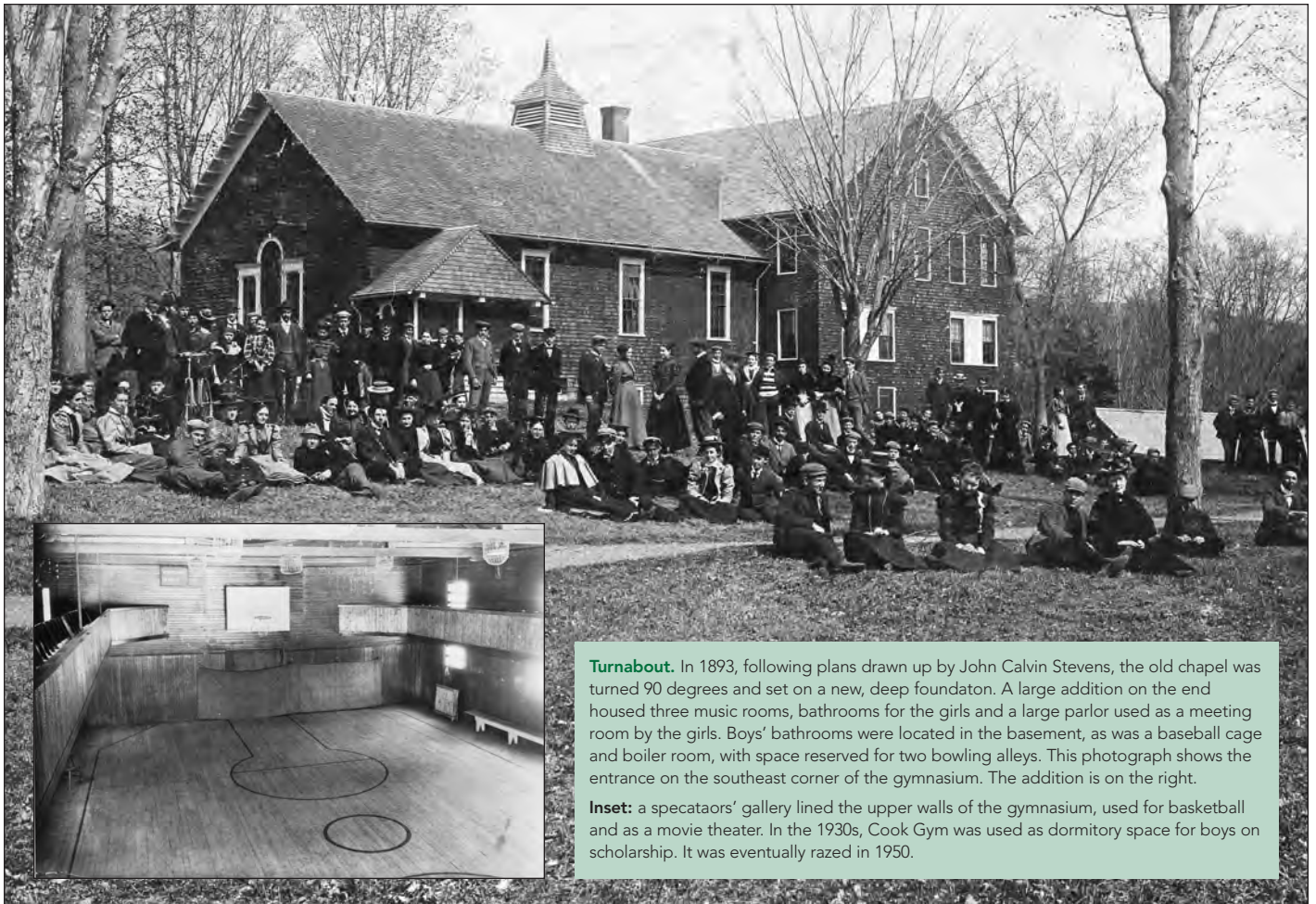
In the early part of the twentieth century, Hebron teams included football, basketball, athletics, tennis and baseball. Interest ran high enough, that in 1905, Mr. Sargent noted the need for an instructor devoted mostly to athletics. In the fall of 1908, he hired the freshly-graduated Charles Dwyer as coach and teacher. Although Coach Dwyer preferred to be thought of as a teacher, he did much in the ensuing years to shape Hebron's overall athletic program.

Hockey made its first appearance in 1922, when Coach Dwyer and interested boys cleared an area on Andrews Field and flooded it to make a rink. By 1925, trustee F.O. Stanley 1873 had funded a covered arena, situated in the hollow between Sturtevant Hall and Sturtevant Home. But as the athletic program grew, the need for a larger gymnasium also grew.

Sargent Memorial Gymnasium

The school catalog for 1923–1924 lists an athletic requirement for all boys; the school stopped admitting girls in 1922. Fall offerings were football, track and tennis; in winter boys could choose basketball, track, "gymnasium," hockey and "winter sports." Spring was devoted to baseball, track and tennis.

Early in 1923, with a capital campaign in the offing, the trustees appointed a committee of alumni to look into the school's needs and make a report to the board. The committee recommended that the campaign goals should be a new gymnasium dedicated to the memory of William Sargent (who suffered a debilitating stroke in 1921 and died in 1922) and an improved field. Fund raising began, but disagreements about the gymnasium site delayed construction. Meanwhile, Sturtevant Home burned in February 1927, leaving its residents homeless. The trustees were forced to use gymnasium funds to rebuild the dorm before embarking on new construction.



Turnabout. In 1893, following plans drawn up by John Calvin Stevens, the old chapel was turned 90 degrees and set on a new, deep foundation. A large addition on the end housed three music rooms, bathrooms for the girls and a large parlor used as a meeting room by the girls. Boys' bathrooms were located in the basement, as was a baseball cage and boiler room, with space reserved for two bowling alleys. This photograph shows the entrance on the southeast corner of the gymnasium. The addition is on the right.

Inset: a spectators' gallery lined the upper walls of the gymnasium, used for basketball and as a movie theater. In the 1930s, Cook Gym was used as dormitory space for boys on scholarship. It was eventually razed in 1950.

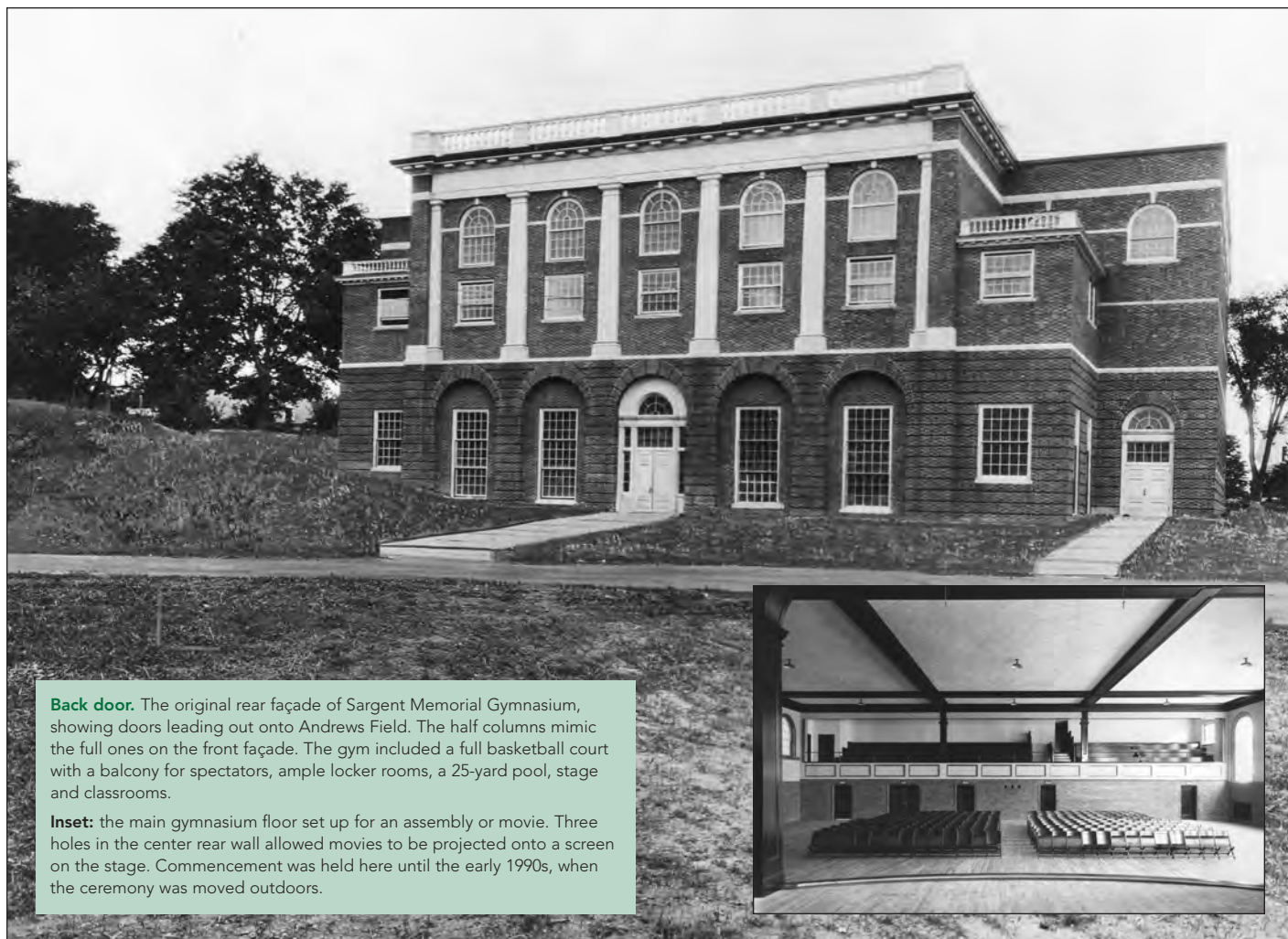
With the reopening of Sturtevant Home in the fall, the trustees turned their attention back to the gymnasium. The original design called for a monumental south-facing structure sited on the western side of Andrews Field next to the Stanley Building. By 1928, work at this site had progressed to the point of moving Barrows Lodge across the South Paris road and excavating the foundation.

Finally, after much discussion, George Treat 1894 offered to fill the existing hole and dig a new one—buying land and relocating several buildings along the South Paris and Buckfield roads at the same time. The new building was ready for use in 1929. Its grand front façade was complemented by a similar rear façade with doors opening directly onto the field, unifying the athletic complex for the first time.

Sargent Gymnasium, Andrews Field and the Stanley Arena would serve together as Hebron's athletic facilities for another 30 years.



Field and team. An early view of Andrews Field, looking down the western side towards the South Paris road. The principal's house (now Allen House) can be seen between the high jump uprights. On the far left are buildings that were moved to make room for the eventual construction of Sargent Memorial Gymnasium.



Back door. The original rear façade of Sargent Memorial Gymnasium, showing doors leading out onto Andrews Field. The half columns mimic the full ones on the front façade. The gym included a full basketball court with a balcony for spectators, ample locker rooms, a 25-yard pool, stage and classrooms.

Inset: the main gymnasium floor set up for an assembly or movie. Three holes in the center rear wall allowed movies to be projected onto a screen on the stage. Commencement was held here until the early 1990s, when the ceremony was moved outdoors.

Moving south. An aerial photograph of Dwyer Fields and the main campus beyond. The trustees purchased a 30-acre parcel and developed ten of them. The field complex includes a football field with a track around it. Two fields are used for soccer, softball and baseball with another for field hockey and lacrosse. The open rink can be seen just above the track. Houses line the South Paris road where Halford Hall would be built in 1967.



The second building boom

When headmaster Claude Allen reopened the school after World War II, he focused first on hiring teachers and finding students. The fall term opened with 125 students and 14 teachers, including Coach Dwyer, who worked and lived in Hebron until the mid-1960s. In that first year, Hebron fielded teams in football, cross country, basketball, skiing, hockey, swimming, baseball, track and tennis.

Soccer was introduced in 1956, but with three football squads sharing Andrews Field, the team was forced to use a field on Greenwood Mountain, five miles from campus. One field would no longer suffice. Once again, the trustees authorized a fund raising campaign with goals that included a new science building and multiple fields on land to the southwest of the main campus. With this campaign, the campus began a second period of significant change and growth.

In 1952, the Stanley Arena roof had collapsed under the weight of rain-soaked snow. The arena was rebuilt, but collapsed again in 1960, just as the new science building was nearing completion. The trustees acquired three acres at the top of

the hill adjoining the site of the new playing fields, and an outdoor artificial ice rink was installed in 1961. (It remained open until 1993, when three generations of the Robinson family enclosed it, creating a new arena with locker rooms and spectator area.)

At graduation, the class of 1950 had first proposed new fields to honor Coach Dwyer and designated their class gift for that purpose. Other alumni and friends stepped forward over the next few years. Campaign donors made up the rest of the required \$150,000 and rough grading began in 1959. The fields were dedicated in 1963 with Coach Dwyer in attendance and Olympic medalist Jesse Owens as the featured speaker.

Construction of Halford Hall in 1967 and Hupper Library in 1970 rounded out an extraordinary decade of expansion. The campus now straddled the South Paris road with academics clustered on the north side of campus and the residential and athletic facilities spread out on both sides of the road.

Fast forward

The return of girls to Hebron in 1972 again changed the athletic program. Additional teams were formed in many

sports and new ones introduced. Hebron's girls are just as skilled and competitive as the boys, and the rich, strong, inclusive athletics program has outgrown venerable Sargent Gymnasium.

The new center—the largest building on campus—will again be a gateway to Hebron athletics, providing ample space for all of our teams, a new fitness center, elevated track, squash courts, meeting rooms and locker rooms, not to mention a new field below. Mr. Sargent and Mr. Allen would be proud.

Did You Know?

Hebron Academy fields teams in 15 different sports with parallel offerings for boys and girls in each season.

Fall: cross country • field hockey • football • golf • mountain biking • soccer

Winter: basketball • ice hockey • alpine skiing • snowboarding

Spring: baseball • lacrosse • tennis • track and field • softball