Herbert Dudley Hale

French Method, Health Laws, and Progressive Views on Education Contribute to a New Winchester High School

James Owen Ross

In 1900 the town of Winchester, Massachusetts, turned fifty years of age. Although there were no official festivities to celebrate the anniversary of its incorporation, the community had flourished in its first five decades. The town’s industrial base had “stood still,” but the residential population increased from 4,861 in 1890 to 7,248 in 1900. A number of substantial buildings had recently been finished, were under construction, or were in the planning stages — manifestations of a community of educated and accomplished citizens who enjoyed living in a Boston commuter rail suburb that was characterized by its progressive thinking.

Fourteen years before the anniversary, architects Rand and Taylor had designed a new town hall in the Richardsonian Romanesque style with a monumental clock and bell tower and a wing to house the public library. In 1899 Boston architect George F. Newton had completed a church for the Unitarian congregation in an English Gothic style. In 1904 Boston architects Warren and Smith would begin working on a new building for the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany congregation that also would be designed in the English Gothic style.

Because of the significant increase in the town’s population during this period, Superintendent of Winchester Schools Henry M. Wallradt encouraged the town to construct a new high school building. A few months after Wallradt’s report was published, Winchester citizens voted at a town meeting to investigate two issues pertaining to the 1866 high school building. The first was to determine whether there was interest in raising the money to enlarge and furnish new classrooms in the old high school.
school. The second was to discern whether there was interest in appointing a committee to plan a new building. A Special Committee was formed to investigate the two issues, and it included the current School Committee members Charles F. A. Currier (chairman of the School Committee), Albert F. Blaisdell, and Frank F. Carpenter, along with Arthur H. Russell, Samuel J. Elder, Preston Pond, and Charles E. L. Wingate. The committee concluded that the building, which had been enlarged in 1886 and 1894, was “not suitable for the modern requirements of high school work” and was not centrally located.

By June of 1902, town officials had created the Winchester High School Committee to build a new state-of-the-art high school (figure 1). Members of the committee included School Board Chairman Charles F. A. Currier, Daniel B. Badger, Charles E. Corey, Edwin N. Lovering, and Lewis Parkhurst, a Dartmouth graduate and a principal of the high school from 1886 to 1891. Parkhurst, who had subsequently left teaching to pursue a career in the private sector with the publishing house of Ginn and Company, was named chairman. When the High School Committee began meeting, their main objectives were to provide the community with a building that residents would find harmonious and that would be suitable for “one of the best schools in the state.” The site for the new school was a tract of land on the Mystic Valley Parkway between Main and Washington Streets “rising high above the street and overlooking the Mill Pond” and the buildings of the town center. The land had been left to the town by Mrs. Nancy Symmes Howe for the purpose of constructing a new town hall and library.

The High School Committee held the first of seventy-seven meetings on June 23, 1902. Less than two months later, after investigating new school buildings in the area, the committee identified five candidates to design the new facility. Each architect or firm was paid $100 to cover expenses for a conceptual set of plans that would satisfy the published instructions. Proposals were due on August 18. Among the five competitors was Herbert Dudley Hale (1866–1908), architect of the widely published South Boston High School, completed earlier in the year. The committee chose the plans that Hale submitted. Other competitors were Coit and Holt, Boston architects and Winchester residents; Everett and Mead of Boston; Hartwell, Richardson, and Driver of Boston; and George F. Newton of Boston.

In explaining why Hale was selected, Chairman Parkhurst later observed: “His education in architecture both in this country and abroad and recent experience in building a large high school made him eminently well qualified to direct this work, and the result of his studies speaks for itself and needs no commendation of mine.” The question remains, however, as to whether Hale’s personal accomplishments gave him the advantage over the other four entrants or whether his proposal was accepted, in part, due to his father’s position in the community and his considerable political connections.

Hale was the son of the Reverend Dr. Edward Everett Hale (1822–1909), a distinguished Harvard-educated Unitarian minister nationally known for his writing and liberal theology. The senior Hale promoted such causes as the education of blacks, working men’s housing, and world peace. Over the course of his long and distinguished career, he was a professor of Greek and later a president of Harvard College; governor of Massachusetts; United States congressman; United States senator from Massachusetts; ambassador to England; Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and beginning in 1903, chaplain of the United States Senate. A ten-volume set of Hale’s Works was published in 1898–1900. Charles F. A. Currier, chairman of the Winchester School Committee, considered Hale to be “the most distinguished citizen of Winchester in all its history.”

Herbert Dudley Hale was born in Dorchester on July 22, 1866. His family later moved to a stately Greek Revival house on Highland Street in Roxbury, a Boston streetcar suburb. Hale’s father described the neighborhood as a place like “all people will live when the Kingdom of Heaven comes.” In 1884, after graduating from Roxbury Latin School, Herbert matriculated at Harvard to continue his preparation in the liberal arts, receiving his A.B. degree in 1888 (figure 2).

Like other members of his family — older sister Ellen, a well-known painter in the Boston area, and brother Philip, who would also become a well-known painter — Edward had an artistic inclination. At Harvard he enrolled in courses in art and architectural history, and he took courses offered in the Lawrence Scientific School that prepared students to continue the study of architecture. Programs in architecture existed in American universities as early as 1868 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1871 at the University of Illinois and at Cornell, and 1881 at Columbia. Harvard would launch its architecture program in 1893, after Hale had finished his studies there. Like another aspiring architect, Ernest Flagg, Hale wanted “the prestige it gives one” in New York City and elsewhere in America to study in Paris at the École des Beaux-Arts, founded in 1671 during the reign of Louis XIV.

Admission to the École’s architecture program was highly competitive. Entrance was based upon rank after the candidates took a rigid set of examinations in studio art exercises and oral and written tests. Only a limited number of those receiving the highest rating were accepted. The first three requirements assessed the applicant’s artistic talent in three areas: 1) a twelve-hour sketch en loge in architectural design; 2) drawing from the cast of an architectural fragment; and 3) three-dimensional modeling in clay from an
architectural ornament. The other three requirements tested the applicant's academic preparation in 4) mathematics, specifically arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; 5) descriptive geometry with general problems in lines, planes, and developments; and 6) the candidate's general knowledge of two areas of history: ancient and modern European.\textsuperscript{22}

In preparing for the examination, candidates typically worked up to six months in the office of an established architect. Thus, after graduating from Harvard, Hale apprenticed in the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, then sat for the examinations the next July. He placed twenty-eighth out of the thirty-six students admitted to the second class in 1889 and entered Blondel's atelier.\textsuperscript{23}

Hale’s professors at the École, like Blondel, were practicing architects of the highest standing, “usually winners of the Grand Prix de Rome, with the best training obtainable, and engaged in some of the great public building projects in France.”\textsuperscript{24} Whereas the term “Beaux-Arts” is sometimes used to identify a style, it may also be considered a method of design.\textsuperscript{25} The institution’s pedagogical approach stressed individual instruction, with promotions decided by juries composed of practition-

ers who were not affiliated with the students. The student determined how much work he would undertake as he moved through the program.\textsuperscript{26} The average number of years required to complete the course of study was between six and ten, and to receive the coveted diploma, students had to pass an extensive final examination given once per year.\textsuperscript{27}

Students at the École were taught that construction was as important as architectural composition.\textsuperscript{28} To that end, the final examination consisted of two sections. One section involved designing a building that demonstrated the student’s knowledge of design and construction, and the other consisted of oral examinations on material that had been presented in lecture courses. For the design section, the student had to show how a building would be put together from the ground up: 1) the design of the building, 2) document drawings of the building, 3) full-size drawings of details, 4) specifications, and 5) an oral examination, which included questions about the building’s construction and materials. Candidates were allowed up to six months to complete the first section of the final examination. The oral examination tested the student’s knowledge of architectural history; physics and chemistry as they applied to architecture; and building codes.\textsuperscript{29} In 1895, six-and-a-half years after he entered the École, Hale was one of the first three Americans to receive the coveted diploma.\textsuperscript{30}

Before finishing his studies in Paris, on April 2, 1892, Hale married Curzon's Mills heiress Margaret C. Marquand. The following year, they had a son, Herbert Dudley, Jr., the first of their five children. At the end of 1895, with his hard-earned diploma in hand, Hale and his family returned to Boston, where he opened an office at 15 Exchange Street. Within two years, his practice was well-established. One of his early commissions was the Beacon Chambers Apartment Hotel, ca. 1899, at 19-27 Myrtle Street, Boston. Hale also designed the Cabot Street bath-house; the Attleboro Savings Bank, ca. 1899, North Attleboro, Massachusetts; and the Charles Head residence, ca. 1903, a large manor house in the French country style at Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, similar in concept to the cottages of Newport, Rhode Island. Prior to his work on South Boston High School, Hale completed one other school commission, the renovation of the Putnam Free School in Boston.\textsuperscript{31}
While American graduates of the École were trained to design in French styles, when they returned to the United States, they often shifted their attention to American Colonial sources. In Paris, from the early 1890s on, architectural history lectures focused on French architecture. The idea of a national tradition prepared the American students to work in an American style when they returned home, and they soon contributed to the Colonial Revival that was gaining in popularity. By the turn of the twentieth century, “Beaux-Arts” architecture in the United States embraced a variety of styles, both French and Anglo-American in inspiration. Given the aspirations of Winchester’s leaders for their community, it is not surprising that Hale’s design for the new high school was in the grand English manner of the Georgian style.

The exterior of Winchester High School, like that of South Boston High School, was embellished with fine classical detailing. The façade of South Boston, however, has a more monumental entrance than the one designed for Winchester (figure 3). This may have been due to the need to control the cost of the Winchester building. Yet there was a well-proportioned and beautifully detailed porte-cochère on the side entrance on Washington Street, which echoed the popularity of the feature in private residences in town. Hale’s use of buff-colored brick and terra cotta to simulate limestone enhanced the formal exterior and was in keeping with the vogue for this aesthetic in Boston in the 1890s following the construction of the Boston Public Library, 1887–1898, by McKim, Mead and White.

Although the site for the new school was not flat, as would have been favored for a Beaux-Arts design, Hale’s plan for Winchester High School assumed an unencumbered site, which was preferred by the École. The French method was to develop a building design from its plan. Working in this way, Hale established that the main entrance to the high school would be above a steep grade, which would give the building an imposing appearance from the town center and pond below. École students were well-versed in the architecture of the Italian Renaissance, and the grandeur of the high school’s siting is reminiscent of Michelangelo’s Campidoglio, ca. 1537, in Rome.

According to Hale, his plan for South Boston was “radically different from any other in Boston,” and he used it again in his plan for Winchester High School. Yet his configuration of spaces was a standard Beaux-Arts solution, with the corridors of the building organized along two axes that cross one another inside a rectangle (figure 4). The first axis of the Winchester school became apparent when one entered the building through its symmetrical façade and followed the hallway straight ahead to the balcony of the gymnasium. The second axis of the plan connected the two secondary entries at the ends of a wide central corridor. The axes intersected at a right angle where the entry hall and the corridor crossed. What was admired about this plan was its clarity, which made it easy for users to comprehend and negotiate.
The wide corridor in Hale’s design for the Winchester school also served a ventilation scheme, an idea that would subsequently be copied by other architects in schools around the country. At the end of the nineteenth century, Massachusetts passed legislation that required that public buildings, including schools, provide a specific amount of “pure air” per cubic foot per minute. Hale specified a state-of-the-art fresh-air heating and ventilation system to keep the students warm or cool as well as to keep germs moving out of the building through ventilation ducts leading into the attic. Fans forced heated or cooled air, depending on the season, up into the classrooms and offices via registers in the ducts high in the walls near the ceilings. Another set of registers in ducts in the walls near the floor removed the vitiated air, or so-called “foul air,” from the rooms into the attic where it was expelled into the atmosphere. In statements about the building, Hale pointed out that the heating and ventilating system conformed to the requirements of the Commonwealth’s regulations. Exterior doors on the first floor at each end of the wide corridor enhanced the flow of fresh air throughout the building.

Hale’s school buildings in Boston and Winchester provided spaces and facilities that responded to the progressive thinkers of his age. At a time when tuberculosis was still a major concern, public health officials promoted hot school lunches, hygiene, and exercise in a gymnasium when weather prohibited outdoor activities. In the basement level, Winchester High School had a high drill hall or gymnasium for physical education, an idea borrowed from the German education system (figure 5). Other modern facilities in the basement level included separate locker rooms for boys and girls, complete with showers, and a cafeteria-style lunchroom.

Winchester High School provided ten traditional classrooms, each with space for forty-two desks, and recitation rooms for rote memorization (figures 6, 7). On the second floor, there was a two-story assembly hall with a large ceiling light above the seating and a stage with dressing rooms for theatrical performances. On the third floor, there were two large scientific laboratories, equipped for specialized study. Also on the third floor, there was a large studio for art instruction, with skylights to enhance the room’s illumination. An adjoining room was devoted to the storage of plaster casts of classical sculptures used in drawing classes. Across the hall was a photography classroom with a separate darkroom. There was little difference in the overall plans of the Boston and Winchester schools except that South Boston had twice as many students and thus had that many more classrooms, with other spaces like laboratories being much larger. Moreover, neither plan had provisions for technical, vocational, mechanical training, or home economics like other schools in the Boston area.

The interior of Winchester High School included detailing that was consistent with the neo-Georgian style. In the wide corridor on the first floor, marking the intersection of the two axes, Hale placed classical columns at the corners, and he used coordinating pilasters to define segments.
of the hallway (figure 8). In the library, Hale added a chimney breast to house the firebox and a shallow display shelf on top of the bookcases along with wood paneling on the walls, giving the space the feeling of a library in an accomplished person’s home (figure 9).

Throughout the decade of the 1880s, educators were concerned about the pernicious impact of bad light upon sight. As early as 1865, studies had been conducted to determine the proper illumination of classrooms. Locating classrooms along the east and southeast sides of a site was determined to be the best situation, in part because the rooms were easier to warm in winter, were more cheerful, and were considered “healthier.” The higher the window, the better. Studies had also shown that positioning window sills higher than about the height of a pupil’s head when seated was best. In addition, educators believed natural lighting was most desirable. But they recommended that electric lights be used in high schools at the beginning of the day in winter months as well as throughout the year for evening adult classes. Direct sunlight was to be directed to the students’ desks by manually controlled blinds or diffused by special glass or curtains. The Winchester School Committee’s 1903 Report emphasized the importance of the new school’s large high windows, designed “to give a maximum amount of light.” Furthermore, the walls were painted olive green, “the color which is the least harmful to scholars’ eyes.”

The cost to build Hale’s design for the new high school was $110,000. This cost was more than twice the limit set by Massachusetts law for the amount municipalities could borrow to finance public projects. In response to the governor’s questioning of the expense, Winchester School Committee Chairman Parkhurst lamented that the governor had not known “just the kind of building we proposed to erect in Winchester.” To enable the town to proceed with the project, the legislature of the Commonwealth passed legislation to raise the borrowing limit to $125,000. Of the overall construction expenses, $79,691 was paid to the general contractor, while the state-of-the-art heating and ventilating system installed by Isaac Coffin & Co. cost another $9,452, or approximately one-tenth of the building’s overall cost.

According to the Winchester Star, the weather on May 30, 1904, “was not very favorable for a large attendance at the inspection of the new High School on Monday as the rain in the afternoon kept many people away. However, hundreds inspected the building from basement to top floor during the day.” Over the summer of 1904, the furnishings and decorations that had delayed the school’s opening the previous spring were installed, and the new high school officially opened at
the beginning of the 1904-05 academic year. With the publication of Hale’s design of the South Boston High School, along with illustrations of his Winchester High School published in the international edition of the July 9, 1904, issue of the American Architect and Building News, architects around the country and elsewhere would soon be designing schools similar to Hale’s “radically different plan,” like those developed between 1908 and 1914 by architect William Ittner for the St. Louis, Missouri, School Committee.44

In the meantime, national publication of Hale’s Boston area schools brought numerous school projects into his practice: Plainfield, Montclair, and Paterson, New Jersey; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Philadelphia.45 Upon winning two competitions in 1905 to design two buildings in New York City, the twelve-story Engineering Society Building on West 39th Street and the ten-story McCrery Department Store, Hale relocated his primary office to 11 East 24th Street in New York.

Hale entered into a partnership with Chicago architect James Gamble Rogers, whose practice would eventually include many commissions on the Yale campus, where he had studied. Apparently the men were old friends from days at the École.46 In addition to Hale’s Boston and New York City offices, the new partnership of Hale and Rogers continued to operate from Rogers’s office in Chicago, and subsequently, the men opened a fourth office in Philadelphia. The team pursued buildings for various branches of government, including the new Shelby County Courthouse in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1905; and competitions, like the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad Station at Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1906; the Soldiers’ Memorial in Pittsburgh, in 1907; and the new U.S. Post Office Building in New Orleans in 1908. The firm completed a new Corporate Office Building for B&O in Baltimore by 1908. In Philadelphia, the partnership was responsible for shipbuilding plants and “interior decoration of their steamships.”47

Within three years of the Winchester High School’s dedication, however, Hale was in poor health, and he retired from the practice. At the time of his death, the Engineering Society Building in New York City was still under construction.48 On November 10, 1908, at the age of 42, Hale died at his home at 82 East 55th Street in New York City. Two days later, the Newburyport (Mass.) News reported that Hale had been buried on Sawyers Hill near the summer place of the Marquand family.49 In December of 1908, the Harvard Bulletin reported that Hale had “spent part of the summer of ’08 in Europe,” noting that “the beneficial effects of his trip abroad gave his family and friends some encouragement until within a few weeks he began to fail again.”50

People who knew Hale thought that “to meet him was to be at once charmed by his rare good fellowship, his sparkling wit, and genial personality. He fairly bubbled over with life and spirits, and made all who came within his circle partakers of his happiness.”51 Although the number of commissions Hale received was curtailed by his poor health and untimely death, the legacy of his training at the École and his abilities as an architect live on in the designs of important buildings in the history of American architecture, including the Winchester High School. Today the building is newly renovated and gleaming, modernized as an elementary school to educate new generations of the town’s children in the century ahead.52

(James Owen Ross lives in Skowhegan, Maine, where he works as an architect and writes about the impact of public health theories on American architecture during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.)

NOTES
6. In 1886, in addition to enlarging the building, the means of ventilating the building was also changed. One of the large chimneys was used to remove vitiated air from the building via a hot steam pipe to enhance the upward movement of air after foul air entered the shaft through ventilators placed in the floors of the rooms adjoining the shaft. See “Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Superintendent,” in Reports of the Town Officers of Winchester, Mass. For Year Ending December 31, 1886 (Winchester: Town of Winchester, March 1887), p. 205.
9. Chapman, pp. 256-257 and 291. Chapman observes that the design of the town hall “was criticized at the time and has often been criticized since, chiefly for a lack of compactness in the mass, and for a want of harmony in the architectural style.” p. 291. He points out that the “lack of compactness” was due, in part, to the last-minute decision to add a wing to the original plans to house the town library. At the time when the location of the town hall and library was being debated, Nancy Symmes Howe drew up her will, leaving her house and property to the town for “a Town House and Public Library Building” (Nov. 7, 1889). She asked that the town memorialize her father, Zachariah Symmes, with a marker that would be attached to the building.


15. The house was later moved to 12 Morley Street.


22. Weatherhead, p. 17.


28. Ibid.

29. Weatherhead, p. 18.

30. Bacon, p. 33.
Please insert the following Errata slip in *The Architects of Winchester, Massachusetts*, Number 5, 2005

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**ERRATA**

*Herbert Dudley Hale*

*French Method, Health Laws, and Progressive Views on Education Contribute to a New Winchester High School*

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Page 2

Paragraph 2, last sentence:
Delete: “in the community and his considerable political connections.”

Paragraph 3
Replace with:
Hale was the son of the Reverend Dr. Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909), a distinguished Harvard educated Unitarian minister nationally known for his writing and liberal theology. The senior Hale promoted such causes as the education of blacks, working men’s housing, and world peace. Beginning in 1903, he served as chaplain of the United States Senate. A ten-volume set of Hale’s *Works* was published in 1899-1901.

Paragraph 6, first sentence
Substitute Herbert for Edward – “Herbert had an artistic inclination.”

*Note:* Edward Everett, not Edward Everett Hale, was professor of Greek and later president of Harvard College, governor and secretary of state for Massachusetts, United States congressman and senator from Massachusetts, and ambassador to England. In the *Winchester Star* of June 3, 1904, Charles F.A. Currier, chairman of the Winchester School Committee, referred to Edward Everett as the “most distinguished citizen of Winchester.”