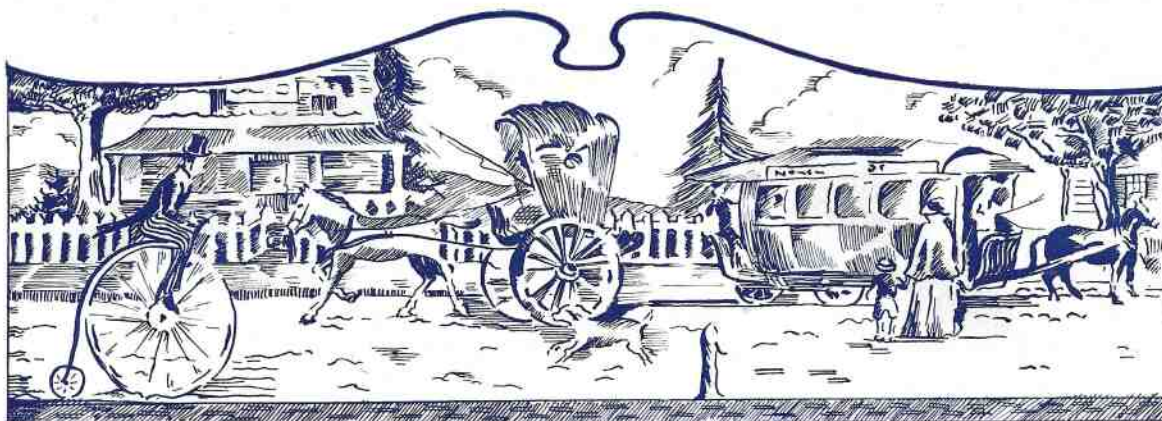




Another form of activity which began early in our history was the school paper. In 1848 the first issue of the "Excelsior" appeared. It was painstakingly written in the fine, spidery longhand of the period, now almost illegible, on four sheets of foolscap, and read aloud to the school every Saturday morning. The editors for each weekly edition were a boy and girl appointed by the principal. Their material consisted mostly of class compositions. The first printed paper, the "The-saurus", was published from 1859 to 1886. It contained flowery compositions by the students on such subjects as "Spring," "Hope," and "The Importance of Greek and Latin in Modern Life;" editorials on school and national events (especially during the Civil War years); copies of examinations; statistics called "The Altar" and "The Urn"; and some droll bits of humor. Its notices and reviews of school happenings provide the best source of material on school life of the period.

Despite the lack of transportation facilities, students in those early years enjoyed many trips and excursions. Botany and geology classes made field trips with their teachers, and groups frequently traveled to historic spots in Concord, Lexington, and Boston. One year the boys made a walking trip over the route taken by Paul Revere from Boston to Lexington in 1775. A school tradition was the June excursion, when the entire student body went on a picnic, perhaps to Framingham or Nahant.

Another custom was the annual Christmas Party. At the banquet toasts were made, often in rhyme, to the teachers, the "young ladies," the "young gentlemen," the Nation, the State, the President, the Governor, music, the classics, and the colleges to which alumni of the school most often went, such as Harvard, Yale, Amherst and Brown. Then the tables were cleared away and the students took part in promenades and square dances, perhaps played a few games like "Blind Man's Buff," sang around the piano, exchanged gifts and good wishes, and departed into the snowy night.

Yes, high school certainly was harder in those days, but maybe it was more fun, too!

