

GOULD ACADEMY

Historical Sketch

The following appeared in the Academy's 1895-1896 Catalog

The people of Bethel have always shown an active interest in education.

No town in the state can boast of having a larger percentage of college graduates among its residents or of having sent proportionately so large a number of young men and women to the colleges and seminaries of *New England*.

The first settlers brought with them the habits of their Puritan ancestors, and early took measures to have their children enjoy the advantages of education. A school was established as early as 1788 and a schoolhouse was soon built.

In 1835 the citizens formed an organization as trustees of the Bethel High School, a hall was fitted up for a school-room and N. T. True was employed as principal. Encouraged by their success, the trustees reorganized and obtained a charter for an Academy, which by act of the Legislature, January 27, 1836, was incorporated as Bethel Academy. A building was erected and Isaac Randall was the first instructor and opened the first term of school on the second Wednesday of September, 1836.

The institution was without funds and depended upon public patronage for support. But in 1842, Rev. Daniel Gould of Rumford, made a bequest, since known as the "Gould Fund," on condition that the name be changed to "Gould's Academy in Bethel," which was done. A grant of a half-township of land was made in 1850; this was sold and the proceeds were termed the "State Fund." In 1855, Dr. John Grover made a donation, the interest of which was to be expended only for chemical and physical apparatus.

The present academy building was built in 1881, is well lighted, pleasant, and fully adapted to the purpose for which it was erected.

Among other gifts to the Academy should be mentioned those of the citizens of Bethel, who, at different times during the early days, subscribed such sums as they could for the needs of the institution; and especially in 1882, when \$1,123.00 was raised in this way for the purpose of furnishing the new building. Through the kindness of the Bethel Water Company, the building is supplied with pure water.

In 1891, by a resolve of the Legislature, the Academy realized several thousand dollars.