



**Center Court Park
School Street**

This was the original site of the Consolidated School in Boylston Center. The construction of the Wachusett Reservoir in the late 1800's had caused the closing of three District Schools of Boylston, Massachusetts. By the early 1900's: the West School, the Northeast School, and the Sawyer's Mills School were taken in the eminent domain proceedings by the Massachusetts Metropolitan Water Board. With these closings, it had become obvious that a new centralized school was desired to make the grades and education more efficient. The School Committee and School Superintendent began recommending a consolidated school in their reports.

“On March 3, 1902, a proposal was made at the Annual Town Meeting to build a consolidated schoolhouse. After considerable debate, the motion was tabled. At a Special Meeting on March 17th of the same year, the voters agreed to appoint a special study committee consisting of the Selectmen, plus Charles E. Cutter, George A. Hastings, and George A. Flagg. The Committee read its report on April 14th — it recommended the building of a school at a cost of \$8,000 to \$10,000 on a site located on School Street,... Again, there was heated debate, and the citizens failed to muster the two thirds vote necessary to accept the motion.”

Two weeks later, another Meeting was convened. Debate is described as having been ‘volcanic,’ with the Minister, Rev. Cooper vowing to go to jail rather than send his daughter to a consolidated school. A first vote ended with 49 ‘ayes,’ and 33 ‘nays.’ A motion to divide the house was defeated, but it was agreed to vote by Voter Check List. The result was 52 ‘ayes,’ and 35 ‘nays’; the motion lost again! As the meeting broke up in disorder, a fierce argument erupted on the Town Hall steps between the Rev. Cooper and John N. Flagg, only cooler heads prevented a physical confrontation.” “The motion again lost at a Meeting on May 12, 54 ‘yeas’ to 42 ‘nays.’

The issue was allowed to cool for ten months. On March 2, 1903, the school building project was finally approved.” A lot of land was then purchased from James A. Bigelow opposite the Old Burial Ground in Boylston Center.

“The new, commodious two-story school opened its doors in 1904, much to the delight of teachers and students alike. The era of the District School was finished. Horse drawn carriages/barges were used to transport outlying students to the new school.”



Consolidated School
Boylston Center, Massachusetts
Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Photograph Collection



Graduates of Consolidated School -1911
Boylston, Massachusetts
Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Photograph Collection

BHSM seeking identities of any students in this photograph.
Email: info@boylstonhistory.org

Consolidated School Classroom -1913 (right)
Boylston, Massachusetts
Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Photograph Collection

Consolidated School Class (below)
BHSM seeking identities of any students in these photographs.
Email: info@boylstonhistory.org



The town was so overburdened with first grade school children in 1953 that the Consolidated School as well as the Morningdale School had to send some of their pupils to a temporary schoolroom in the Town Hall at 7 Central Street. Once again, after one hundred twenty years, the Town Hall was used to house classes. In 1955, a new larger modern school replaced the Consolidated School which was dismantled in 1957.

Now the land which contains an historic marker to commemorate the location of the Consolidated School continues to serve the residents of Boylston as the *Center Court Park* which proudly sits in Boylston's Historic District. Under the jurisdiction of the Boylston Parks and Recreation Department, this recreation area located in Boylston Center now offers basketball courts, play equipment and an ice-skating rink for our residents. Thank you, Parks and Recreation Department, for maintaining this historic site and gem of a park!

Acknowledgements:
Boylston Historical Series, Filgate, *Educational History of Boylston* by G.L.Wright; & *History of Boylston 1886-1979*, by W. O. Dupuis, 2012
Crane, Carrie, *The Taking of Sawyers Mills*, Boylston Historical Society & Museum Publication, 2021
Haynes, Judy, *Sawyers Mills School*, Boylston Historical Society & Museum Publication, 2021
Photograph Collection, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc.