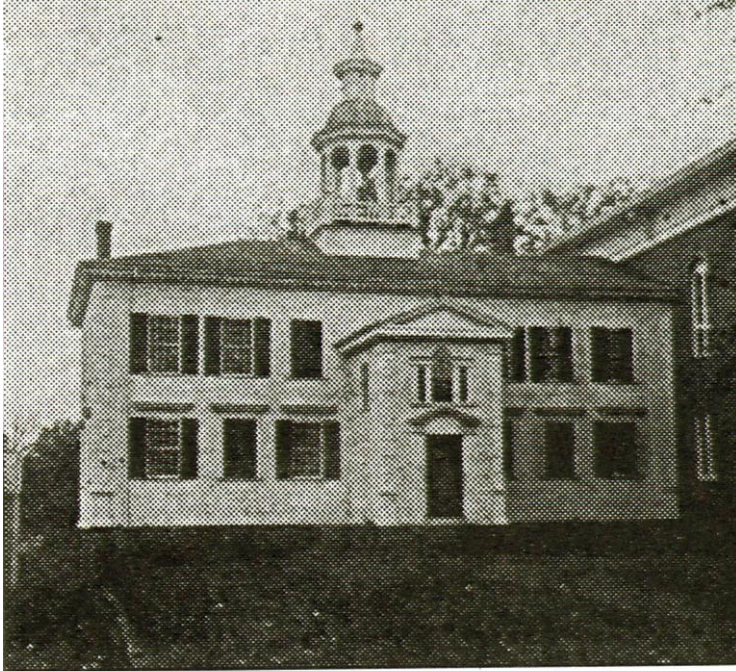


Westfield Academy Fund



In January 1793, Westfield decided to become the seventh town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to establish an academy school for secondary education. It took seven years to raise the funds, purchase a site and construct the building, but the Westfield Academy was finally dedicated on January 1, 1800. In his dedication speech, Samuel Fowler, Esq. stated, "May it [the academy] continue to afford an opportunity for acquiring every branch of learning which is useful to the individual and beneficial to the community."

The Old Westfield Academy building. Present day location is the parking lot next to the fire station

The Westfield Academy flourished, but Massachusetts laws dictated that public education be provided in towns with over 500 families. In September 1855, Westfield High School officially opened to serve the students of our community. In 1865, Westfield Academy closed due to declining enrollment and the trustees sold the building to Westfield (for WHS) in 1867. They intended to use the money from the sale to rebuild Westfield Academy in another section of Westfield, but that never happened. Instead, the trustees mandated that the money from the sale of the building be placed in the Westfield Academy Fund. It was their bequest that the interest from this fund be used for educational instruction.

The current trustees of the Westfield Academy Fund now allocate money from this fund in the form of grants to worthy public charities. In accordance with the intent of the original trustees, these funds must benefit Westfield students. Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of Westfield received a grant from the Westfield Academy Fund for this scholarship.

Submitted: October 1, 2005