



City of Methuen

Office of the Mayor

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William M. Manzi, III
Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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RARE ROBERT FROST DOCUMENT DISPLAYED FOR THE FIRST TIME
Robert Frost's 1893 Attendance Register Was Displayed At Frost Festival

A one of a kind Methuen school attendance register, hand inscribed by legendary poet and former Methuen resident Robert Frost, was displayed for the first time ever at the Robert Frost Foundation's Frost Festival last weekend. The attendance register contains the names of Methuen students who Frost taught in the early months of 1893. All of the names and markings are in Frost's own hand, and the register itself is signed by Frost in two places. There are also pages written and signed by Frost's mother, former Methuen teacher Bell Frost.

Michael Hughes discovered the register approximately twenty years ago. He was a Methuen High School history teacher at the time. Hughes knew that teachers were legally required to keep an attendance register and that Methuen was required retain those documents. That information led to his discovery. The register was turned over to the Methuen Historical Society and eventually placed with the rest of Methuen's historic items in the basement of the Masonic Lodge on Broadway.

When Hughes, who is also the chairman of Mayor Manzi's Commission on Housing and Preservation of Historic City Archives, mentioned the existence of the register to Matt Kraunelis, Mayor Manzi's chief of staff and a Robert Frost fan, Kraunelis asked Historic Planner Lynn Smiledge to look for it and put it in a safe place. She discovered it in the basement of the Masonic Lodge last June. It was found within two feet of the floodwater that continues to plague the building. A month after the register was found, the basement experienced another serious flood that would have certainly damaged the document had it still been there. It is now stored in a safe at city hall.

After spending a semester at Dartmouth College in the fall of 1892, Robert Frost returned to the Merrimack Valley. He is quoted in an interview with the Dartmouth alumni magazine as saying "I had decided that I was up to no good at Dartmouth, so I just went home to Methuen." His mother asked him to take over her eight-grade class at the Second Grammar School, which then stood on the corner of Lawrence and Park streets. He taught the class from January 2, 1893 to March 24, 1893. It was his first foray into teaching, something that would become a major part of his life in the years to come.

Kraunelis was invited to display and discuss the item on October 25th at the 12th Annual Robert Frost Festival in Lawrence. Robert Frost enthusiasts were pleased to see the register, which had never been displayed at a public event before. James Sitar, archive editor for the Poetry Foundation in Chicago, commented that the register was "quite a find" and complimented the City of Methuen for taking steps to preserve it. Mayor Manzi commented that the importance of the register to both the City of Methuen and Robert Frost's legacy cannot be overstated. He hopes to put the item on permanent display so that all Methuen citizens and Robert Frost fans can see and enjoy it.

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RECORD OF ATTENDANCE in the <i>Second Semester</i> School for the term commencing		<i>Jan 2</i> 1877, and ending <i>March 28</i> 1877, taught by <i>Robert L. Frost</i>	
No.	Name of Student	Jan 2	Jan 9
1	Quarrier, Jennet		
2	Walter, John B.		
3	Walt, John B.		
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RECORD OF ATTENDANCE in the <i>Second Semester</i> School for the Term commencing		<i>Jan 2</i> 1877, and ending <i>March 24</i> 1877, taught by <i>Robert L. Frost</i>	
No.	Name of Student	Jan 2	Jan 9
1	Walt, John B.		