



Brown's Academy

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Just across the street from the Davis Home, Poplar Hill, high on another hill stands a great example of turn of the century, brick architecture.

If you have been inside the building that is now the home of town offices, you will have seen that much of the interior remains intact. Large windows and woodwork from a different era could easily be used as a movie set. Several years ago, Fritz Wetherbee recorded a segment for New Hampshire Chronicle here. Much of the information for this article was drawn from his report and the History of Rockingham County.

D. Hamilton (Duane Hamilton) Hurd. History of Rockingham and Strafford counties, New Hampshire : with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men

Namesake of the school, Rufus Brown, is mentioned at length in the Hamilton history. Raised a farmer, Rufus grew to be an astute business man and what today we would call an entrepreneur. With little more than an elementary school education, he and his brother apprenticed with their uncle at his printing business. Rufus seems to have had a gift for invention at a time when the industrial revolution was first stirring and is listed on patents for washing machines and threshing machines.

He shrewdly used prison labor for some of his ventures in manufacturing and his real estate endeavors were particularly lucrative. He bought up land in Lawrence, MA before the advent of the mills and the utilization of the river as a power source and the profits he made there were the basis of his wealth.

His will from 1904 left an endowment for creation of Brown's Academy which served as the elementary school for the town of East Kingston for 85 years. Many long time residents will remember their school days in that building. Even though the building now houses the town offices, the Brown legacy continues. The Brown's Academy Trustees annually award scholarships from the proceeds of the Brown Academy Trust to scholars from East Kingston continuing their education on the college level.