

**Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives, Inc.  
8 Meetinghouse Lane  
Madison, Connecticut 06443  
203 245 5667**

**Number 27**

**Hand Academy**



***Hand Academy 1884***

Academy Elementary School is the third building and the second school to stand on this spot. In 1714 John Grave II built a house here for his son John Grave III. In 1884 the house was torn down to make way for Hand Academy, which was built by Daniel Hand as a high school for the town of Madison. Mr. Hand, a Madison native, had been a successful merchant in the South during the Civil War.

He arranged to have Hand Academy built in 1884 at a cost of \$15,000 and gave it to the town with the provision that the building must forever be used as a school. He also gave the town some property on Wall Street. The income from that property was to be used to purchase books and materials for the school.

Hand Academy served as Madison's high school until 1921, when it was razed to make way for Hand Consolidated School, a new school designed to serve

town pupils of all ages.

The district elementary schools were closed, and all pupils were to attend school in the newly constructed building. The Rockland District was judged to be too far from the new school to transport its children, so they did not attend the consolidated school until several years later.

A plaque set into the southwest corner of the present building marks the corner of the original Hand Academy. This grand old lady of Madison schools has served as a high school, a middle school, and an elementary school. Hand Consolidated School became the Madison Middle School, which in turn became the Academy Elementary School, after the construction of the Dr. Robert H. Brown Middle School in North Madison. In 1961 the town built a new high school and named it Daniel Hand High School, thus ensuring that Daniel Hand's legacy lives on.

In 1888 when Mr. Hand was eighty-eight years old, he established a fund for "the education of Negroes," as the fund was described at the time. The exact amount he donated was \$1,000,894.25, all of it in interest-bearing securities. This fund still exists and is administered by the American Missionary Society.

**Directions:** From center of Madison drive west toward Guilford. Continue past the traffic light at the intersection of Route 79 and Route One. Take the next right onto Academy Street. Hand Academy stood where Academy Elementary School now stands at the corner of Meetinghouse Lane and Academy Street.