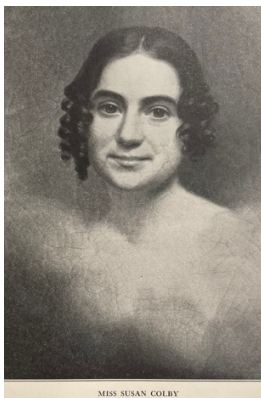


Who Knew?
A Founder of Colby-Sawyer College and Its First Principal Lived in New Hampton.

Susan Farnham Colby (1817-1919) was born in New London, NH to Mary Everett and her husband, entrepreneur Anthony Colby, who later became governor of New Hampshire. For a more advanced education, Susan and several local friends including Sarah Burpee and Martha and Mary Greenwood enrolled as boarders in the New Hampton Female Seminary (NHS). Susan attended the Seminary from 1829 through 1831, and returned to finish in 1834, studying Latin and French as well as standard academic courses such as history, English, algebra, science, economics and moral philosophy.

Not satisfied with being a graduate, Susan returned to NHS in 1836 to be the “Teacher of English Literature.” She did so well that Martha Hazeltine, the highly regarded head of the Female Seminary, wrote to her good friend, Lucy Ann Griggs, “*Your successor, Miss Colby, does admirably. Quite a rival to yourself, we think, in stealing hearts.*”¹ Wanting more education and training, Susan left after a year and traveled to Troy, NY where she spent the 1837-38 school year at the Troy Female Academy founded by the famous educator, Emma Willard. The Troy Academy continues today as the highly regarded Emma Willard School.²

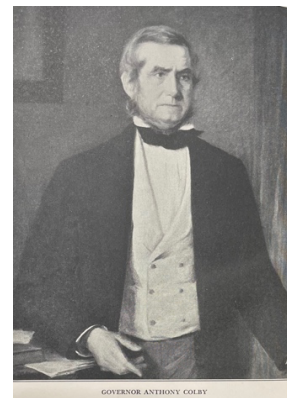
Now ready for a new undertaking, Susan, with the backing of her father, Anthony, helped found New London Academy. The Academy opened in May 1838 with Susan as first teacher and principal and fellow NHS alumna and friend, Martha Greenwood, as her assistant.



MISS SUSAN COLBY



ORIGINAL ACADEMY BUILDING
1837-



GOVERNOR ANTHONY COLBY

Susan Colby, the Academy and Anthony

[from *A Centennial History – Colby Academy* (1937) by Henry K. Rowe]

Clearly fond of her time in our fair village, Susan came back to New Hampton to be principal of the Female Seminary from 1846 to 1848. New Hampton School was twice blessed with Colbys during

¹ May 26, 1836 as quoted in Sarah Sleeper's *Memoir of the Late Martha Hazeltine* [1843], p. 177

² As we were writing this “History Corner” a letter written in February of 1837 from a close friend and classmate of Susan, Lucy Brown, came to light. Lucy had just transferred from NHS to the Troy Female Academy, and begged Susan to follow. Stay tuned for more on this letter (“Susan Colby: The Sequel!”) in a future “History Corner.”

this time, as Susan's father, Anthony, was president of the NHS Board of Trustees. Obviously a multi-tasker, he was also serving as governor of NH (1846-47)!

In 1851 Susan married financier James B. Colgate and together they became benefactors of Colgate University. In recognition of its deep ties with the Colby family, New London Academy changed its name to Colby Academy in 1878.³ The next time you drive through the lovely town of New London and view the campus of Colby-Sawyer College, think of trekking back and forth by carriage to be able to attend, and then lead, the New Hampton Female Seminary.

For more information on the history of the town, please visit the newly updated New Hampton Historical Society website at <https://www.newhamptonhistory.org/>

Kent Bicknell
President, NHHS
Curator of Special Collections
The Gordon-Nash Library at New Hampton School
October 13th, 2022

³ From the "History of Colby-Sawyer College" on the school's website: <https://colby-sawyer.edu/about/history>