

Whatever happened to ... Palmyra's one-room schools? *Part II*

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To continue with “*RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARMINGTON SCHOOL IN THE DAYS OF ‘USED TO BE’*”

The spelling classes were always lined up with toes exactly on a crack in the floor.

A pail of water stood on a bench under a window, with a tin dipper hanging on a peg above it. General thirstiness was quite frequent, so a pupil was often allowed to pass the water. This was a coveted honor and the dipper was filled and passed from hand to hand, for germs were unheard of in those days, and if any did exist they had no evil intent, for health abounded.

At noon dinner pails were brought in from the cold entry, and, if eggs were included in the lunch, they were laid in a row at the highest place in the sloping floor. The one which rolled down the farthest, brought some rank to the owner.

In the winter, after the lunches were eaten, everyone hurried across the road to slide on the ice which had formed on a shallow pond. If there happened to be no ice, there were charades indoors, or perhaps games.

It was great fun to walk to school over frozen snowdrifts and over the fences. If the snow was too deep for walking, bob-sleighs would come and neighboring children would pile in, enjoying the ride together and jingling sleigh-bells.

Nobody minded the cold, for long underwear and leggings, and mittens and caps and coats and overshoe kept it out.

At the last day of school parents were invited and watched their offspring perform, and woe to the ones who forgot a line in their pieces, for speaking in public was nerve wracking.

Those carefree school days are long past, but there still linger in the memory happy, smiling faces, fun and mischievous pranks, and all the glory of the out of doors.”

The following excerpt is from *History of Wayne County, New York 1789 – 1877*.

“The first assembly of the settlers was in 1793. During that year two schoolhouses were erected; one upon a site given by General Swift, on the spot later occupied by the residence of David Dagget, (on Church St. now indicated by state historic marker) the other in East Palmyra, and known as the Hopkins school-house. Both were of logs ...

“The first day of school was a day of excitement. The fall work was done, the shoemaker had gone his rounds and “whipped the cat,” the winter suit had been cut and made by the

tailoress, and some few with “Daboll” and “Murray,” and others less progressively provided, set out for school.

“The first day and the last day were terms of meaning. On the day of commencement the teacher was tried most critically. His government was tested, his education decided by his ability to work out some of the hardest sums, and if all was favorable he was the man of influence in the community in which he “boarded around.” ...There was spelling, ciphering and parsing. There was “single and double rule of three”, “loss and gain,” “square and cube root,” and “single and double position,” all of which were surmounted in eight to twelve weeks. ...”

The district schools in the Town of Palmyra were located as follows: District No. 1- Palmyra Village; No. 2-corner Palmer Rd and Hogback Hill Rd; No. 3-Vienna Rd. near Hammond Rd; No. 4-Vienna Rd. (now-Route 31 and Vienna Rd. on the former Horton property); No. 5-Jeffery Rd. near corner of Walker Rd; No. 6-near corner Hogback Rd. and Floodman Rd; No. 7-cobblestone at North Creek Rd. and Lyon Rd; No. 8 near corner of North Creek Rd. and Harris Rd; No. 9-corner of Schilling Rd. and North Creek Rd, No. 11-Parker Rd and Sherwood Rd. (Palmyra-Marion townline); No. 12-corner Goldsmith Rd. and Marion Rd. (Route 21 N); No. 14-Tellier Rd. across from East Palmyra Presbyterian Church; No. 15-Cambier Rd. near Fagner Rd; No. 16-west side of Maple Ave north of Haak Rd. (...to be continued)