

## DISTRICCT SHOOL #5 – CARTER ROAD

As early as 1813, when Perinton was established as a town, classes were being held in a one-room frame building at the corner of Carter and Whitney Roads. District School #5 served 42 children for 6 months at a cost of \$10.85 in 1819. By 1821 the number had increased to 79 and the money to \$18.34. The number of students remained more or less in the 70 to 80 range through 1845. School district



boundaries were modified several times during that same period, usually by shifting land to an adjoining district in order to accommodate the growing population.

Reflecting the development in the village of Fairport between the 1850's and 1900, the school population in District #5 declined from earlier highs to an average of about 50 students per year with an average yearly cost of about \$70. By 1905 and 1906, the student population had declined to 28 and 30 respectively. The little schoolhouse itself was in good repair with the exception of what seems to have been a common problem, the need for a new and better "closet." Ella Kennedy, the teacher in 1905, was rated as "good" in all respects and earned a salary of \$32 per month. Clark Furman, the teacher in 1906, was only rated as "fair," and as "not strong in discipline," but his salary was \$36 per month. In 1905, Bessie Newton's report card shows that she studied spelling, reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, history, and physiology and that she was a well-behaved high 90's student. A student at District #5 from 1899-1905, she eventually became a Fairport teacher herself.

Jennie Plumb, a former #5 student, wrote about her childhood, giving readers a glimpse into a rural child's life both out of school – chasing geese, picking apples, skating on a local pond – and in school. She writes that the teacher would call the students into the building by rapping her ruler on the window sill. Roll was called and lessons began. If it was cold, a fire would be kindled in the stove with the wood brought by the students. The children sat at their wooden desks and studied a list of vowels or consulted the globe or dictionary, both of which were scarred from use "like soldiers from the war." Parsing sentences, doing equations and cube roots, and preparing for the spelling bee from Sander's Spelling Book also occupied their time. If two students were lucky, they were chosen to go for water from the well and "...got away from studying hours..."

Noontime meant lunch pails of sausage, bread, pies and doughnuts. It also meant being outside and throwing snowballs in the winter, and playing baseball or skipping rope with grapevines in the better weather. It meant singing "Daisy Dan" and "The Cabbage Line" and playing "pom-pom pullaway" or "Blind Man's Bluff" or "drop the handkerchief," and walking along the stone fence "with dextrous skill."

Returning inside for the afternoon, the students demonstrated their knowledge of grammar and arithmetic on the blackboard with chunks of chalk that their teacher had broken off with the stove poker or a jack knife. Perhaps they participated in a spelling bee. In the spring, the teacher might lead a "science walk," which often took longer than planned, as the students were "very fond of loitering to play."

Although the school was modernized and the curriculum updated, the district school was too small to offer the variety of programs available in a larger school. By 1950, District #5 was only serving 16 children in 6 grades. Centralization was inevitable, and it came to Fairport in 1951. District School #5 closed for good in May of 1951 and was sold to Merton Bridges. The building no longer exists, but its story lives on in memoirs and records.

