

DISTRICT SCHOOL #1 at BUSHNELL'S BASIN

In 1813, when Perinton was established, District School #1 stood on Ketchum Road, (now Route 96), in Bushnell's Basin. It was a one-room frame building, sparsely furnished like most early schoolhouses, with benches, a wood stove, and a few books and maps. The building was located on a one-acre parcel of land that had been transferred to Hiram Collins in 1832. Land records note that the one acre was to be "laid out for a school house lot and burying ground."



Three commissioners and three inspectors were appointed by the Town Board to oversee the five district schools. A trustee, a clerk, and a tax collector, elected by the citizens, administered the day-to-day business. At that time, schools were financed by a general tax assessment, tuition payments, and a small amount of state money.

During the 19th century, Bushnell's Basin, like most schools, had a winter term of twenty weeks and a summer term of twelve weeks. Generally, a man would be hired to teach for the winter term, the better to deal with the larger (and more rowdy) male student population, while a woman would be hired for the summer, when the boys were in the fields. In 1827, the school had 38 students; by 1845 there were 82, and by 1851, 107.

Continued growth led to the need for a new building. In 1866, the district was authorized "to levy and collect any amount not exceeding \$2,000 two thousand dollars for the purpose of building and furnishing a School House in said district." The resulting brick structure would stand in front of the cemetery, across from Garnsey Road, until 1978.

School meeting minutes provide small glimpses into the year-to-year concerns of the school district. In 1881, a committee was formed to adapt a reading series; they chose the "American Educational Series." There was also a discussion about "arithmetics. In 1884, the tax collector was short \$31.00 "for which he can give no satisfactory account." A committee was formed to investigate. In 1885, Henry Scovell was paid \$5.00 for building fires at the school during the winter term. No longer would that be the teacher's task. Expenses for 1886 included \$16.38 for coal and \$238.00 for the teacher's salary: \$8 a week for the winter term, and \$6.50 a week for the summer term. By 1892, the school year had been lengthened to 38 weeks, and, by 1905, teacher Emma G. Briggs' salary was \$38.00 per month.

During the first half of the twentieth century, there was considerable concern about the school building and student safety. New desks were purchased, a new floor was laid, and a cupola was added to the building. In 1914, an addition was built at a cost of \$3,006.50, and a second teacher was hired. During the 20's a new heating plant, electrification, and an improved water supply were added, and in the 1930's the schoolyard was fenced.

In the early 1940's, there were 42 students at the Basin school, and 12 attending high school in Pittsford. By 1944, the budget of \$4,610.00 included money for busing the 12 students to Pittsford High School and for a hot lunch program. The teachers were paid \$1,200.00 and the janitor was paid \$25.00 per month.

The days of the district schools, however, were numbered and in February of 1947, the community voted to centralize with Pittsford. The brick schoolhouse sat empty for the first time. Over the next 30 years, the building was used as a community center, and was for a time considered as a possible site for the storage of town records. Unfortunately, in 1978, a heavy snowstorm collapsed the roof and the structure itself was razed later that year.