

DISTRICT SCHOOL #6 – Ayrault and Pittsford-Palmyra Roads

Perinton established its sixth District School 1816. The first classes were held in a one-room frame building on Wapping Bridge Road (today's Ayrault Road), near the intersection with Pittsford-Palmyra Road. The first building was replaced in 1857 with another one-room frame structure which, with its several additions, and its moves to accommodate the realignment of the road, still remains in essentially the same location today.

In 1819, the school was in session for 8 months and 18 days and served 52 students. The number of students had declined to 38 by 1824, but then stayed relatively stable, usually between 40 and 50 students during the 1840's and 50's.. The teacher's salary was about \$50 per year, and the money allocated for the library varied from about \$2 to about \$7. As was common with many district schools, the boundaries changed several times during the first half of the 19th century, most likely due to the increase and shifting of the population.

School #6 was well maintained. In the 1880's a well was dug and a chain pump was installed. The heating system was converted from wood to coal. The State Commissioner commended the school in his 1905 reports for its good condition and noted that the 33 volume library was "well-selected" and used by "about 2/3 of the pupils." First-term teacher Sadie Morse was commended for her scholarship and for her "excellent control." Perhaps that was the reason her monthly salary was increased from \$32 in March of 1905 to \$40 in October of 1905.

The number of students attending District #6 declined during the early 20th century, hovering between 20 and 30 students through the 1940's. A 1941 Monroe County study shows that District #6 served 21 students in grades 1-6 at a per pupil cost of \$73.02.

District #6, like district schools in general, was an important part of the community and strongly supported by parents. In 1920, with the help of teacher Mildred Girk Palmer, the mothers formed a PTA. There were 8 charter members who paid \$.05 monthly dues. The group organized suppers and dances, held teas, and pieced quilts to raise money. The funds were spent on new blackboards, a hot lunch program, a new clock, and holiday parties for the children with ice cream, cake, and candy. The PTA further helped the students by working with the 4-H clubs, by taking the children to dental clinics and by introducing them to the parks. The group remained active until 1952 when the school was closed. By then there were 42 members and their annual dues were \$.60.

John Ward, who started at #6 in 1929, remembered his years there. In a letter, he mentioned that teacher Myrta Blood had a long black buggy whip on her desk with which she could reach almost any student. There were four rows of desks, all on moveable skids, – row one for the 1st and 2nd graders, row two for grades 3 and 4, row three for grades 5 and 6, and the last row for the 7th and 8th graders. He also recalled that the building had been shifted because it was believed that all students should have morning sun on their left. In addition to the classroom, he remembers two cloakrooms and two bathrooms, one set for the boys, and one set for the girls, a library, and a kitchen.

As with all the District schools in Fairport, this one closed in 1952 as the districts were centralized. The building served as a reserve building for the central district until it was sold in 1955 for \$4,000. It has since been a private residence.

