

DISTRICT #8 SCHOOL

On April 24, 1819, Town Clerk Asa Willmarth recorded that school district #8 had been laid out by school commissioners Ezra G. Jones and Reuben Willey. The 1852 map of Perinton shows a school on the north side of Whitney Road in Lot 42 just east of Watson Road, which, according to a brief history of the school by May Watson Fisher, was an old red building on the John M. Watson farm. Apparently, Winfield Watson, John Watson's son, taught there before a new structure was opened in the fall of 1857 at the southeast corner of Watson and Whitney



Roads in Lot 32. That land was purchased from Asa Perkins with the stipulation that a board fence 4.5 feet high be built on the east and south sides of the school and maintained for as long as a school existed on the site.

District #8 was the second largest district in the town behind District #2, reflecting the population growth that was occurring with the opening of the Erie Canal. District #8's boundaries were changed no less than four times as a result of population growth and shift, which saw the school population increase from 62 to 92 between 1821 and 1824.

The 1844 record shows only 41 students, with public funds allocated totaling \$30.66: \$24.52 for wages and \$6.14 for the library. By 1855 the number of students had increased to 59 and the allocated money to \$70.28, \$67.34 of which went for wages. Although the student population in the district had increased to 72 students by 1867 and was costing the taxpayers \$78.35, the average daily attendance was only 20 students. Mrs. L.M. Shaw and Jane Plumb were teachers there during the 1870's, and Ruth Vane taught during the summer terms in 1873 and 1874.

Students of the 1870's were, of course, required to obey certain rules and regulations. The following excerpts from an 1872 educational journal are an historical curiosity, but they also show that some things don't change very much.

Requisitions

- To be punctual at school.
- To bring notes for absence, dated, and signed by persons authorized to do so....
- To bow on presenting or receiving anything.
- To raise the hand as a request to speak.
- To follow every classmate while reading, and correct all errors discovered....

Prohibitions

- To meddle with or take out inkstands, or disturb the contents of another's desk.
- To use any profane or indelicate language.
- To nick name any person
- To indulge in eating in school
- To waste school hours by talking, laughing, playing, idling...

The School Commissioner's Report of 1906 provides a glimpse into the life of District #8 at the turn of the last century. The building itself was in adequate shape except for the chimney and the blackboards, which needed repair. As seemed to be the case with many of the school buildings, the "closets" needed to be replaced. The library had 67 volumes and the care, suitability, and use of the books was "O.K." Teacher Ella Kennedy was responsible for 31 students with an average daily attendance of 24, earned \$30 per month, and was rated as "O.K." in all categories. The school was supplied with a U.S. flag, which was lacking a rope on the

staff, maps of the state and county and foreign countries, but not of the United States, a dictionary, and “material for busy work,” among other items.

District #8 school continued to serve its students until 1952 when it was closed due to centralization. Residents of the district were allowed to bid on such leftover items as desks, picture frames, tables and chairs, playground equipment and a Heatorola stove at an auction held in March, 1956. The building was subsequently sold to Anthony Carlomusto for \$2,006. School #8 was razed a short time later.