

## DISTRICT SCHOOL #11 – “WHITE BROOK ACADEMY”

“White Brook Academy” was formed in 1831 to serve children from the towns of Perinton, Macedon, Victor, and Farmington. It was located in the southeastern part of Perinton on the south side of Wilkinson Road near the South Perinton United Methodist Church. The one-room 25’x40’ frame building had double doors which opened into the classroom, a belfry from which the bell called the children to class, and a woodshed on the east side. It was heated in the winter by a pot-bellied stove and cooled in the summer by breezes that came through the large double-hung windows. There were two outhouses or “closets” behind the building. Since there was no well, the students had to haul water in a bucket from the nearby Wilkinson farm.



As was true of many of the rural schools, White Brook served as a center for community activities. School events and other gatherings provided an opportunity for the Wilkinson, Pound, Northrup, Crosby, Bosworth, Cline, Nicholson, Ryan and Woolsey families to socialize. In addition, the Methodist Church congregation met in the school while awaiting the completion of their building, also on Wilkinson Road.

District #11 served a school population that grew from an average of 40 to 42 students to an average of 62 students and then back to about 45 students by the 1860’s. The library list from 1844 mentioned 69 volumes, including *A Life of George Washington*, *Life of Black Hawk*, *History of Texas*, *Goldsmith’s View of the World*, *Ship Wrecks and Disasters*, and *Sowing and Reaping*.

The 1850 report of the School District trustees has a wealth of information. That year the school was open for 10 months and was allocated \$38.64 from public funds, and an additional \$6.75 for the library to purchase “a globe and books for the district library,” which had 198 volumes. Of \$40.62 raised in local tax money that year, \$12.50 was used for fuel and \$1.45 was used for repairs. \$101.35 was also raised for wages. Eighty-two children were taught in the district that year, although many did not attend full time. The record shows that 40 children attended between 8 and 12 months, 34 for between 2 and 8 months, and 8 for less than 2 months. Two children were exempted from payment of teacher’s wages “on account of indigence....” There were no “colored children.”

In 1906, the commissioner’s report noted that the building was generally in good shape and was “well shaded.” Agnes Dwyer taught the 34 enrolled students and earned \$32.00 per month. She was well-rated, having the “confidence of pupils.” 18 year old Bessie Dryer, a graduate of Fairport High School and its teacher training class, taught at #11 school in 1909. Each day she took the Rochester, Syracuse, and Eastern trolley to Egypt and then walked the two miles to the school. Her 26 students, in grades 1 through 8, were taught, mostly by the drill method, from basic texts that had been passed down from year to year. She remembered her students as well-behaved and interested. In addition to her teaching duties, Bessie served as janitor and was responsible for making out the district’s tax lists.

The 1927 White Brook Academy reunion was attended by about 250, of which 9 were former teachers: Bessie Dryer, Dora Bluhm, Celia Thayer, Mildred Hunt, Nellie Ryan, Charles Butler, Ella Blazey, William Harris, and Gertrude Ryan.

During the 1930’s and 1940’s, the school population continued to decline. The average daily attendance in 1940 was only 13, with some area students choosing to attend school outside the district. Only grades 1 through 7 were available. In 1951 when Fairport schools centralized, White Brook Academy was closed. Its contents were sold at auction, with the bell going to the Perinton Historical Society. The building was sold to Adolph and Dorothy May.

In 1966 the structure was destroyed by fire.