

## EDUCATING THE CHILDREN of PERINTON & FAIRPORT – AN OVERVIEW

Educational institutions were well established in New York by the time Perinton created the community's first five districts in 1813. In the seventeenth century the Dutch established universal free schools, in 1784, the State of New York formed the Board of Regents, and in 1795 the State began providing financial support.

The first of Perinton's schools was District School #1 on Ketchum Road (now Pittsford-Victor Road) in Bushnells' Basin. The second was first located on Fairport Road just east of the intersection with Baird Road, but by the 1850's had moved to its present location on the west side of Baird Road. School #3 was located on Turk Hill Road just south of the Ellsworth farm. School #4 was located in the hamlet of Egypt, originally near the Mason Road-Pittsford-Palmyra Road intersection, and finally at the Victor Road intersection. The fifth district school was located on Carter Road a bit north of Whitney Road.

Between 1816 and 1831 the town grew and with it the need for schools. Six new districts were added during this period. School #6 was opened on the west side of Ayrault Road at the corner of Pittsford-Palmyra Road. The "Joy School," or School #7 (later redesignated as #12), was named after the family that provided the land for the school, and was located on Macedon Center Road. The northeast section of town gained another school, #8, which was located in the vicinity of Watson and Whitney Roads,

The village of Fairport, having grown significantly as a result of the canal, became the location for school #9. In 1826 a cobblestone building was erected on East Church Street opposite Parker Street. The school was enlarged and then replaced by a new structure in 1855. District school #10 was located south of School #3 at the top of Turk Hill near Casa Larga. Southeast Perinton was the location for School #11, which was built on Wilkinson Road near South Perinton Church.

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw school expansion, primarily in the village of Fairport, as that was where the population continued to expand. In 1840, the town population was 2513 and the village 200. By 1900, the town population had doubled to 4703, but the village population had skyrocketed by 1000% to 2743. In 1872 a new school, the Fairport Union School, was built on West Church Street. Chartered by the state in 1874, it was the first school in the town to have separate grade levels. Replacing a temporary school in an old shed, the Northside Grammar School on East Avenue was erected in 1876. An addition was added to the Union School in 1888, which became a grammar school in 1923 when a "state of the art" high school was built on West Avenue.

The next great educational enterprise was centralization, which came to New York and to Perinton in the 1950's. The district schools were eliminated and replaced by centralized elementary schools, junior high schools, and a high school. During the 50's and 60's five new schools were built to accommodate the ever-growing population. A new high school and two more elementary schools were built in the 1970's, making a total of nine schools in the Fairport district. However, in 1984, with a decline in the school age population, the old West Avenue School was sold and developed as condominiums. During the next fifteen years, as the town expanded, schools were renovated, sometimes enlarged, junior high schools and elementary schools changed their grade structure, and middle schools were established.

Subsequent columns will tell the stories of the individual district schools, the earlier high schools, and centralization.