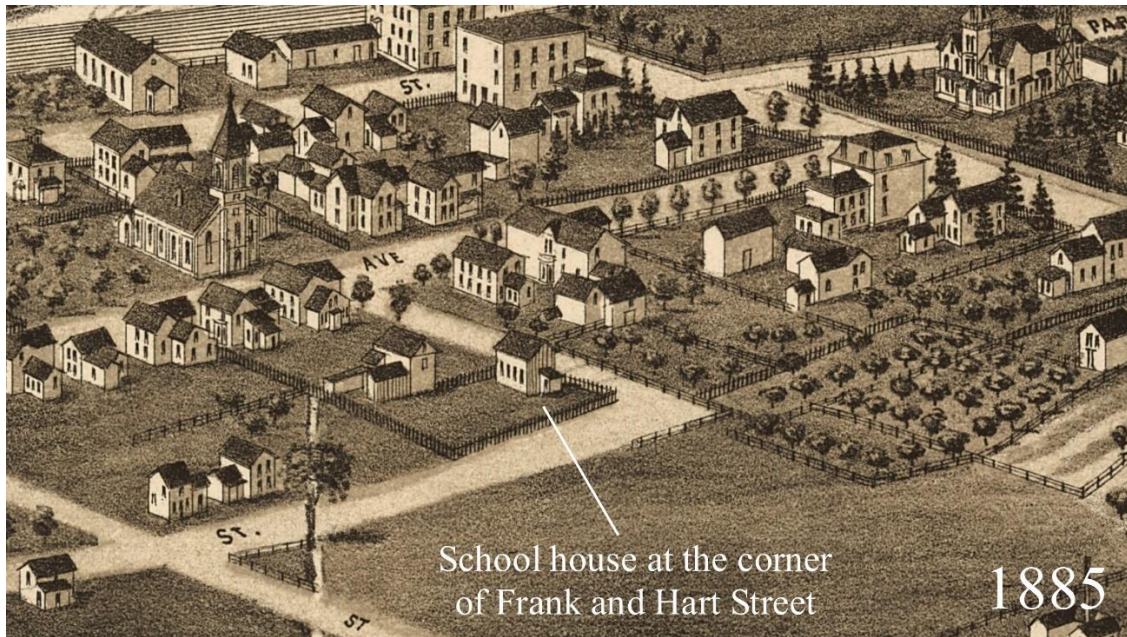


The Long-Lost School on Fairport's Hart Street

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

Residents on the north side of the village must have been excited the day the big, new brick school opened at East Avenue. The year was 1886, and the growing population in the area caused a demand for more classrooms. The new \$8,000 building, with two rooms on the first floor and two on the second floor, was later doubled in size.



The house at 12 Hart Street is on the lot where children once attended a one room school house, and may then have been modified for use as a home in 1886.

Where did the children in this neighborhood attend school prior to the opening of the East Avenue building in the fall of 1886? It has been believed that classes were held in a nearby private home. However, an examination of Fairport newspapers from the era provide additional clues. In November of 1885, Miss Nellie Peck is listed as the teacher at “the North side School”. Months later, in the summer of 1886, at the same time the grounds of the new East Avenue school were being prepared, the Board of Education offered for sale “the primary school building, corner of Hart and Frank Streets, on the north side.” By August 26 1886, the Board of Education placed another advertisement: “School House at Auction. The old school building and lot at the corner of Frank and Hart streets will be sold at public auction, to the highest bidder, with the privilege of leaving one-half the purchase money on bond and mortgage, at the annual school meeting, to be held Tuesday evening, August 31st.”

Clarence DeWitt, a bookkeeper at the DeLand factory, owned several lots on East Avenue, and had sold the land to the Fairport School District on which the new school was built. DeWitt and his family lived in a significant home at the corner of East Avenue and Hart Street, on a lot that backed up to the school yard of the one room school house.



1960 photo of the house at 12 Hart Street, the bones of which are believed to have been the first school on the north side of the village.

By October of 1886, students had attended the new East Avenue school for several weeks. A newspaper account in the Monroe County Mail confirmed plans for the neighborhood children's previous place of instruction: "The old school house on the north side is being converted into a dwelling house, by Mr. Clarence DeWitt."

All of this confirms that a school house, existed on the corner of Frank and Hart Streets, where number 12 Hart Street stands today. The question remains, is the current house in fact the old school that was "converted into a dwelling house" by Clarence DeWitt? It seems likely, but proving it might be challenging.

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