

## HEBRON PRESERVATION SOCIETY MUSEUM SCHOOLHOUSE

The first meeting of what was to be known as the MUNSON HOLLOW SCHOOL, District #17, was held in 1816 at the house built by David Hopkins, now the home of Charlie and Aggy Duveen, and formerly the Ensign family home on State Route 22 in East Hebron. Classes were held in Gilbert Hard's "shop" for which the district paid \$1.00 per month. Tuition was a quarter cord of wood per scholar, delivered at the school, or a payment of twenty schillings per cord.

Between the years 1837 and 1844, school meeting minutes tell of the appointment of a commissioner to inspect the school for needed repairs at the cost of \$6.00. The commissioner made a catalogue of books suitable for a district library. The books were purchased in 1839 and a librarian was appointed. In 1843 it was noted there were "73 library books on hand, 27 children were taught, and 38 children reside in the district."

On September 5, 1844, with Charles J. White as moderator, it was resolved that a committee be appointed to determine the costs of repairing the old schoolhouse and also the expense of building a new one. The committee members were Ashel Sheldon, Asa E. Munson, James R. Wilson, and William I. Joslin. On September 15<sup>th</sup> it was voted to repair the old school in a "substantial manner." On September 21<sup>st</sup> they were asked to reconsider the vote to repair the old school. Finally, on March 31, 1845, at a special meeting, it was decided to "remove the site for the school to the east side of the turnpike on the land of William Joslin." (Book 11, Page 137, Deeds of Washington County, shows this lot was purchased from William and Ann Joslin in 1845 for \$500.00) The trustees were James R. Wilson, James J. Joslin, and John S. McFarland. At a meeting on April 21, 1845, it was voted that the new schoolhouse was to be "in the new style with plank." It was to be painted red and trimmed with white.

We do not know the date of the completion or occupancy, but the minutes of October 3, 1848 continued as District #16 and mention that the wood was to be furnished by auction to the lowest bidder. Jeremiah Hatch was to furnish three cords of hardwood for \$7.50.

The December 5, 1850 meeting must have been quite heated as it is mentioned that the people would not pass what the trustees proposed. After much deliberation, it was passed to allow \$9.00 for wood, \$.50 for contingent expenses, school would be held

for seven months (three in winter and four in summer), and the district would board teachers voluntarily according to the number of scholars each voter sent to school. Also voted in was to raise \$49.00 for teacher's wages for the year.

Motions made by the trustees did not pass easily as is evident from the minutes. On October 2, 1854 a motion was made to raise \$15 to build a privy but the motion lost. The next year, October 8, 1855, the motion was made again with the cost reduced \$10 and was lost. At last, on October 9, 1860, the motion was passed to raise \$30 to build a wood house and privy.

From 1861 to 1873 things seem to have gone quite smoothly. The minutes mostly deal with the general upkeep of the building. However, at the August 30, 1873 meeting, the Building Commissioner gave his report for improving the inside of the school. Repairs as follows: "inside is to be sealed overhead and on the sides, new floor to be laid, new desks – 16 or 18 in number. Front to be changed to be two doors in front with two lobbies. East side to be clapboards as high as the 'jet-jut.' Windows to be repaired where needed. New clapboards on the front as high as top of windows. Painted inside and out. A new chimney to be built to come down into the school room to rest on a cupboard with a door and shelves for books." There was much discussion and argument over this proposal. Many were changed.

The report of the Building Commissioner was all voted down at the September 7, 1873 meeting. It was noted "that at 9pm the house being refractory, the clerk left for home and another was appointed." After a cooling off period they finally decided at the October 19, 1873 meeting to repair the school about as the first commissioner suggested. It was also voted that "a board be placed on the end of the house with the number of the district."

Evidently the repair of the school was completed by November 12, 1873. At the November 18, 1873 meeting, a report was given showing a debt of \$259.82. It was voted to assess a tax of this amount on the properties of the school district to pay the bill.

A special meeting was called on November 19, 1877 to choose a series of textbooks and they chose the set recommended by the school commissioners, the same grade of books as used in the Salem Washington Academy.

The December 28, 1878 minutes show that Jeremiah Hatch was awarded the contract for three cords of wood, split and put in the shed for \$8.75. John Allen was appointed librarian for several years.

It is interesting to note the costs of maintaining the school. At the October 9, 1883 meeting it was reported that “public money received was \$72.02. Amount of money raised by tax was \$60.88. Total received \$186.90. Pay for the teacher of the winter term of fourteen weeks at \$5.00 per week: \$70.00. Pay for the teacher of the summer term of fourteen weeks at \$4.00 per week: \$56.00. Received for wood as per vote, \$9.40. Pay for cleaning the schoolhouse: \$1.50. Total disbursement: \$136.90.”

By 1891, the teachers were making more money and putting in more time as is shown by the minutes of the August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. The finance report as follows: “Payment: Window glass \$.50, bell \$1.00, fuel \$11.50, building fires \$3.25. Paid teacher for the winter term of sixteen weeks at \$5.75 per week: \$92.00. Paid Miss Englesbee, teacher for the summer term of sixteen weeks \$5.50 per week: \$88.00. Total payment of \$194.25.” There was no mention of income.

Repairs were needed so, at the August 7, 1894 meeting, it was voted that “there be a new floor laid in the schoolhouse with paper underneath, also that the north side of said schoolhouse be shingled.” A year later, at the August 1, 1895 meeting, P.Q. Wilson and E.Y. Nelson were then chosen to purchase and erect a “suitable flag.”

For ten years all went along smoothly with notations of minor repairs. The next entry to mention expenditures occurs at the August 1, 1905 meeting. The following is taken from the minutes: “receipts: Public money \$125.00, collect by tax \$175.05. Total \$300.05. Disbursements: paint \$22.14, painting \$15.80, shingles and loin \$14.12, laying shingles, \$5.63, cleaning schoolhouse and chalk \$1.35, stovepipe \$.50, nails \$.40, merchandise \$2.55, four cords of wood \$16.00, sawing, splitting, etc. \$5.00, building fires \$5.50, teachers’ wages \$202.00. Total \$290.99. Trustee E.K. Beebe, Clerk Henry Wilson, and Collector Edward Brown. On motion it was voted that the trustee be authorized to purchase and place in the schoolhouse a sufficient number of new desks and seats to accommodate the pupils of the school.

In 1912 more repairs were made to the school and, in 1914, a blackboard was purchased costing \$5.00. On May 2, 1916, the school was changed from District #16 to District #12.

At the May 4, 1926 meeting, the following resolution was offered and ordered written in as part of the minutes:  
“WHEREAS under laws recently passed by the legislature of New York State and it is alleged giving to the educational department of said state the unlimited authority to consolidate the rural school districts of the state without advice or consent of the voters of the rural districts, therefore be it resolved by the voters of the District #12, Town of Hebron, in annual meeting assembled that such action on the part of officials of the education department in consolidating said districts without the consent of the voters thereof is gross encroachment on the rights and liberties of the voters of said district guaranteed to them under the Constitution of the United States.”

During the 1930s, the trustees were empowered to arrange for transportation of pupils to high school if necessary. By May 2, 1938 a budget of \$1419.00 for the coming year was voted upon and accepted. A year later, May 2, 1939, the school was changed from District #12 to District #2.

At the May 2, 1944 meeting there was considerable talk of closing the school for the coming year because, as near as could be estimated by talking to the parents of school children in the district, only two would be present. Owen Ensign suggested “we wait until we are more definite as to how many would actually be coming” so it was left as unfinished business.

A special meeting was called on May 26, 1944 to determine whether transportation would be furnished for pupils to Salem High School, Granville High School, or both, and whether to keep the school open for the coming year. Owen Ensign was chosen as chairman. Voting by ballot was taken, first regarding transportation, there was a total of nine votes, all in favor of giving the pupils their choice of going either place. A vote was taken by ballots whether to close the school for the coming year or to keep it open. There was a total of nine votes, three in favor of keeping the school open and six in favor of closing it.

A motion was made at the May 1, 1945 meeting to have the school remain closed for the coming year. The budget was \$900. Each May thereafter it was voted to keep the school closed but maintained. Then a special committee was chosen by vote at the May 1, 1956 meeting to inquire into, and gain facts on, the effects of the new state law on the tax rate and state aid and whether the balance left over from a previous year could be used to lower the tax rate for an ensuing year and the conditions under which this school would have to comply to centralize with Salem Central School. A rough estimate of income and expenses for the

coming year was prepared as follows: 15 pupils at \$150 each from tuition, \$2250 for maintenance of school and grounds, \$50 possible extra expenses, \$150 balance in the bank, estimated state aid \$1150, amount to be raised by taxes \$1150.

Resolution concerning the building: Resolved that it is the feeling of this meeting that the schoolhouse and the grounds be in the control of the legal voters in the present district, and this property be used as a community center, and be it further resolved that a committee of two, Mrs. Owen Ensign and Mr. Vernon Sheldon, be elected by this meeting to take possession of the schoolhouse keys and be responsible for the management of the schoolhouse property and they serve until other appropriate arrangement is made by properly constituted authority (Although not dated it is assumed that this resolution was made on June 5, 1956).

Due to new tax law passed July 1, 1956, it was mandatory that the district centralize with the Salem District. At a special meeting, signatures from 31 out of 34 voters in the district requested to be annexed with the Salem District.

In 1975, the Hebron Preservation Society became interested in the school with the idea of restoring it to use as a museum. James Gambee, Dwight Coldwell, and Donald Swift, men experienced in restoring old buildings, examined the structure and found it to be quite sound. After much research and deliberation between Donald Swift and the Salem Board of Education, it was determined that the Society would have the use of the building for \$1.00 per year. An appeal for contributions and volunteers was made and many from the Society and community gave their money, time, and energy for restoration.

The East Hebron School was deeded to the Hebron Preservation Society in 1978. On September 13, 1988, the membership voted to name the museum the HEBRON SCHOOL MUSEUM. Mary L. Campbell was appointed the first curator of the Museum. After her death in 1983, Gertrude Getty Patterson and Elizabeth Randles Kelly shared the position.

Due to the expanding collection of non-school objects, the Trustees of the Society suggested looking into acquiring another building. In 1990 the Murtha house, to the north of the school, became available. After much discussion, the members voted to purchase the property. The entire complex was then renamed THE HEBRON PRESERVATION SOCIETY MUSEUM. Upon the resignation of Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Kelly in 1991, the Board of Trustees appointed Jerrie Porrier curator. Finally, in August 2002, after twelve years of renovation work with volunteers, not only working on the building and grounds, but also

helping to raise funds through various projects, the house was ready to be furnished. This was accomplished through the generous donations from some of our members.

The Murtha house has since been sold but the Schoolhouse remains as the “headquarters” of the Hebron Preservation Society.