

# School Days

by Lynne Belluscio

This year, we are holding school for both the first grades and the fourth grades. We have moved all the old school desks into the basement kitchen and in the front of the room is a blackboard and portraits of Presidents Washington and Lincoln.

It's hard for today's students to imagine a time when everyone walked to school - - when there was only one teacher - - when the bathrooms were in a little house behind the school and everyone drank out of the same dipper. Everyone enjoys writing on the slates, as long as no one makes that terrible screeching sound with the slate pencils. And the McGuffey Readers provide some moralistic stories that everyone enjoys.

Today I ventured up to the archives and brought down the record books of District 6 that was on Harris Road. In fact, the District 6 school house is the last one-room school house in LeRoy that hasn't been razed or made into a house.

The earliest records of District 6 were written in September 1831. At that time they voted to hold a four month school session beginning in November (after the harvest) and the winter session was to be taught by a man. The summer session - taught by a woman was to commence on May 1. The records indicate that each scholar's parent or guardian was to provide  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cord of wood and that the wood had to be delivered within six days of the commencement of school. The teacher was to inspect the wood.

In 1860, an inventory of the school library books was recorded. It was noted that 3 books had been lost and that there was 112 books in the library, which included the life of John Adams, George Washington, Franklin, Columbus, Lafayette, Cromwell, William Wallace and Red Jacket. There was a book on agricultural chemistry, ornithology, Cook's Voyages and the Mexican War. There was a copy of the memoirs of Bonaparte and Esop's Fables and The Women of the Revolution as well as "Confessions of a Schoolmaster" and a copy of Jessie Buel's Agriculturalist.



In the early years, teacher's wages ranged from \$2.00 to \$2.50 a week. And even though the teacher had to inspect the firewood, they didn't have to build the fire each day. That was another expense of \$1 or \$2 per semester.

In 1892, the district paid \$2 for chalk, paper, brooms and other school supplies. In July 1898 a special meeting was held to vote on building a new school house. The vote was four to zero and three men were elected to the building committee. It was decided to sell the old school house for \$12 and to raise \$700 to build the new one. Every tax payer was expected to help "draw material." At the annual meeting held on August 1, 1899, it was reported that the total cost of the new school building was \$670.69 - - well under budget.

Nellie Harris who had been teaching at the old school, was hired to be the first teacher at the new school. Nellie, whose father was a trustee of the district, had attended the Geneseo Normal School and would teach in District 6 for seven years, until she married.

In May 1928, a vote was taken to find out the feelings of the voters in regard to opening or closing

the school for the year 1928-1929. When the final vote was taken, it was five to close the school and four to keep it open. The following year it was voted five to one to keep the school open.

In 1934, the board voted to have a blackboard installed in the front of the room. (I think it's the one that's still there.) By 1936, there was a lot of discussion about providing transportation for high school students into the Village to attend the LeRoy High School. The vote was 8 for and 13 against. (It's not clear how the students got to the village.) In 1937, a special meeting was held and it was decided to rescind the decision not to provide transportation for the high school students. The vote was 15 for and 5 against. By 1938, the trustees had voted

to close the school and to find a "suitable person" to drive the students into LeRoy.

On May 4th, 1948, the school trustees met at the home of Willis MacKenzie. It was decided to sell all the school equipment that was not needed and to rent the school house. "It was also decided "that in the event some one was sent to Albany on the question of centralization, that his or her expenses be paid by the District". Finally on July 20, 1949, at a special meeting of District #6, it was voted on and approved to authorize LeRoy Central School District #1 to sell the school house. The last entry in the school records was made on September 29, 1949. The sale of the school house was approved and District #6 ceased to exist.

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