

Village Schools

by Lynne Belluscio

I've been researching LeRoy school houses. It is a challenging project. Since this is an ongoing project, I'm interested in any information that you can provide.

The first school house within the village was built in 1804 on what is now known as Trigon Park. It was the first frame school house west of the Genesee River. In 1818 this school was physically moved with a team of horses to East Main Street, east of Lathrop Avenue. It became known as the East Main School and was soon replaced by a brick building.

In 1879 the brick school was torn down and the brick was used to build the school on East Avenue. Following the opening of the LeRoy Union Free School in 1891 the school on East Avenue was deactivated. It was sold to Daniel O'Shea in June 1911 and became the factory for the manufacture of Cof-fe-no. On July 4, 1876, the Centennial Elm was planted in Trigon Park on the site of the early frame school house. It was marked with a granite marker. (wonder where that is now?) According to some accounts, the Soldiers Monument was erected near the site of the old elm – the former site of the frame school.

As far as I can determine, the next school in the village was built on the west side of Craigie Street. In one article it was described as the first "public" school in LeRoy, although I'm not sure if that's correct. Mrs. Bixby described the school: "It was a large frame, unpainted building ... faced the east and stood flush with the street. After one had gone into a large vestibule there were two doors, opening in. The building was divided into two rooms by a curious partition running east and west and arranged in sections, so that it would be lifted and swung, the two rooms formed into one in this manner. Each section of the partition was four or five feet wide. I recollect

the school as it was in 1830, when I was a pupil."

Most sources indicate that the Baptists and the Episcopalians as well as the Presbyterians met at the Craigie Street School, until their churches were completed. So far I haven't discovered exactly when the school was built. It was known as the "School on the Hill" and was moved to Myrtle Street (then known as Cooper Street).

In 1868, land to the west of the school was purchased and a new larger brick school house was built. Edwin Shepard was the principal and teacher at the Myrtle Street School for over 17 years and the school was often called the Shepard School. Eventually when the LeRoy Union School District was formed, the school was deactivated and used for storage until it was acquired by the Second Baptist Church Society in June 1917.

The first Wolcott Street School was located on the northeast corner of Union and Wolcott Streets. This was known as the "Lodi District", I suspect because the early bridge (now the Clay Street bridge) was known as the Lodi bridge. In 1868, the original school (built?) was replaced by a modern wooden structure on the same site. It was painted white, and was known as "the White School House." It was deactivated in September 1891 and in 1895 was sold to the German Evangelical Lutheran Church Society who rebuilt the interior.

I have looked at the house on the corner of Wolcott and Union and cannot determine if the old school is part of the building. The other school house in the village was originally a stone building on the northeast corner of Lake and School Streets. It was known as the "Stone School," (which could be confused with the Stone School which was located near the corner of Nilesville Road and Route 5). Once again, I have no



Is this the White School House near the corner of Union & Wolcott Street, also known as the Lodi School?

information about when the stone school building was erected.

A letter from M.S. Elmore was published by the *LeRoy Gazette* in 1907. He described the school in the 1840s. There were "wall desks on three sides of the little room and smaller benches about the stove. The boys of varying size sit on the south and west sides ... the furniture is meager, but the water pail and dipper are in the corner and are gratefully recognized in their dual usefulness in quenching thirst or giving an excuse for moving from one's seat."

The writer went on to describe some of the students including Darius Allen whose daily lunch

of doughnuts "lent comfort to his hearty stomach and unctuous odors to his fingers that fumbled in his pocket while he studied." The teacher Dr. Bartlett was known for dramatic productions which were held in front of a bedquilt drop curtain.

The stone school was replaced by a new brick school in 1869. In 1877 it was damaged by fire but quickly rebuilt. The 1894 Sanborn map indicates that it was vacant, so it probably was deactivated with the other schools in 1891. In 1911 the Board of Education sold the school property to John Doran. The building was renovated into an apartment and is still standing.



Lake Street School - is the old brick school part of this building?