

# Images

NEIGHBORS, FAMILY HEALTH

AND BETTER LIVING

99

## LESSONS FROM THE PAST

### There's still much to learn from Barrington's one-room schools

Not too long ago, Barrington-area children attended one-room school houses and many are still around -- serving as links to a bygone era.

**B**arrington's Unit School District 220 today serves 7,730 pupils and its boundaries reach into four counties: Cook, Lake, McHenry and Kane. It is one of the largest school districts in Illinois, covering a total of 72 square miles.

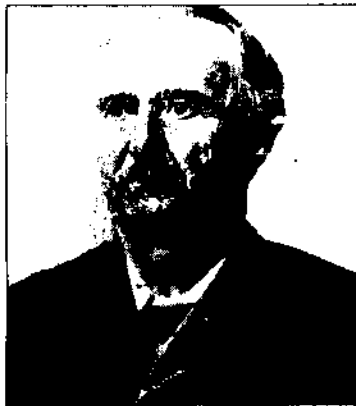
In 1946, following the return of our people from World War II, there were nearly 10,000 one-room school houses still in Illinois, according to Arnett C. Lines' "History of Barrington."

In School District 220 alone, there were 18 one-room school houses at that time. None of these remain in use today, but many are still standing and some have been converted to private residences. They are a great reminder of our historic past and have a lesson to teach us even today.

One of Barrington's earliest one-room schools was a log building that stood on Main Street, just west of Hough Street, near the present-day Catlow Theater. It was built circa 1847, and existed before Barrington was even a town. Lester Delos Castle was a teacher there and walked across the grass prairie from his farm on Hillside to attend classes, according to his great-granddaughter, Grace Castle, who lives in Barrington today.

Even earlier, in 1840, the settlers around Miller Grove on Sutton Road, known as Barrington Center, meant to provide for a one-room log school in their area.

A notice was posted and the



Castle

township of Barrington was organized. The U.S. Government Land Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 provided that, in all new townships carved out of public land in the west, section 16 in every township would be reserved for the support and maintenance of public schools in that township. The ordinance further stated that: "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."

The Miller Grove one-room school house existed at that time and was located just east of the Barrington Center Church. This school building was later torn down and the school moved to property on Brinker Road, where it is now a private residence.

Debbie Wilder Cook attended the Jackson and Haeger schools during the 1930s.



Picture courtesy Lidia Shiley Johnson and Charles Gilly

Lageschulte School was originally located on the northwest corner of Barrington Road and Route 68. In 1934, its students included: Front row — Delight Buell, left, Betty Nimtz, Martha O'Donnell, Donne Hein, Ethel Gilly, Lucille Swanson, and Audry Nimtz; Second row — Harold Shiley, left, Ruth O'Donnell, Dorothy Vucic, Jacqueline Buell, Delvin Johnston, Velma Gilly, John Hein, and teacher Addie Filbert; Third row — Robert O'Donnell, Pete Mooleenaar, Westly Kamp, Robert Gilly, John Johnston, Patrick O'Donnell, and Charles Gilly; Top row — Lidia Shiley, left, Hazel Johnston, Ruth Bettin, and Mary Hein.

"The schools had a potbelly stove for heat, no running water and kerosene lamps for light," Cook recalled. "I remember I wore a heavy sheepskin coat to stay warm and corduroy knickers with high-top leather boots with a special pocket for a jack knife."

"Phoebe Nelson taught at Jackson School, and she was one tough lady. A real no-nonsense teacher."

IF THIS  
OLD HOUSE  
COULD TALK

GEORGE  
VAN HAGEN



George Van Hagen is a lifelong Barrington resident and historian. Historical records made available courtesy of the Barrington Area Historical Society, 212 W. Main St. Mementos of Barrington history are available at its gift shop, (847) 381-1730.

## Directory of Local One-Room Schools

By GEORGE VAN HAGEN

**A** directory of one-room school houses that once existed within the boundaries of our present-day Unit School District 220 would read as follows:

1. Barrington's original one-room school house, built circa 1847 (before Barrington was a town), was located on Main Street west of Hough Street near the present-day Catlow Theater. The log school was sold around 1866 to a Captain Sabin who moved the building across town to become a tavern. At that time, the

students were moved to a new frame building at 320 E. Washington St. The building still exists as a private residence. The first Hough Street School was built in 1855 and consisted of two rooms, one above the other.

2. Miller Grove School, also known as Barrington Center, was built around 1840 just east of the church on Sutton Road. The one-room log building was later torn down and rebuilt of brick on land farther east on Brinker Road. It is now a private residence.

3. Waterman School, built circa 1886, is

(Continued on page 108)



Photo courtesy Barrington Area Historical Society

Dickinson School stands vacant and silent. The one-room school began around 1856.

# WHITE SCHOOL Tribute to a teacher in a one-room school



Photo courtesy Don Johnson/Lillian Linders Kinzell

Don Johnson attended White School starting in 1925. He and Florence Lindberg were the only kids in first grade, and Pearl Benson was the teacher for many years. "She was a saint, if there ever was one," Johnson said. "She cared about all her students and made sure they left her charge with the knowledge they needed to enter high school. "I'm sure I didn't appreciate it at the time, as I should have. But, in thinking back at what she accomplished, it made me realize how difficult her job was. She never

complained and often, after reprimanding a difficult student, she could be found in the cloakroom wiping a tear from her eye. "Miss Benson handled all eight grades alone, starting with first grade in the morning and moving across all eight grades, then starting over and repeating the process until — at day's end — she had covered no less than five subjects with each grade. She was a very good teacher and a great human being."

— George Van Hagen

Students at White School in 1932 included: **Front row** — Floyd Hartwig, left, Jimmy Dinsmore, Melvin Hartwig, Robert Lindberg, Bud Nestlerode, and Peter Johnson; **Second row** — Jesse Rudgers, Eunice Morecraft, Marion Rodgers, Dolores Saracino, Lorraine, unidentified boy, Norman Nestlerode, and Betty Overly; **Third Row** — Don Johnson, left, Gerhardt Neisel, Eileen Jayne, Arlene Hartwig, Russell Mitchell, Florence Lindberg, Doris Overly, and Lillian Linders; in back teacher Jean Herren.

When students at the old Waterman School were sent to fetch wood for the school's stove, they scribbled these notes on the ceiling of the wood shed that have been preserved by the building's current owner.



Photo courtesy Barrington Area Historical Society

# WATERMAN SCHOOL Scribblings from the past

Caught in time are scribblings on the ceiling of the woodshed at the old Waterman School. Here is where the wood was kept for the stove in the school house. Those pupils who were assigned to

keep the fire going had to climb to the top of the wood pile and toss the logs down. Sometimes while on the top of the pile, they found time to leave messages reminiscent of the old school days.

Typical was the poem inscribed and preserved even today:

*"Ladies and gentlemen, take my advice  
Take down your pants and slide on the ice."*

The winter of 1936 found Kelsey School students snow-bound at home — until a horse and sleigh came to pick them up. Passengers on this school 'bus' included: **Front row** — Gordan Hafer, June Jansen, unidentified, Pearl Olumstad, Lillian Immens, Anita Jansen,



Photo courtesy Pearl Olumstad Estes

Edith Olumstad, Phyllis Kelsey, unidentified, Roland Kelsey, Robert Immens, and Myrtle Kirby; **Top row** — Katie Hafer and Florence Smith.

# KELSEY SCHOOL School 'bus' sleigh ride recalled

Pearl Olumstad Estes attended Kelsey School during the early 1930s. That's when students were taught by Eunice Reese who was a descendent of Abraham

Lincoln.

Pearl particularly recalls the winter of 1936 when people were snow bound and some children couldn't get to school for weeks. Finally a team of

horses were hooked up to a sleigh that took them to the school at Kelsey Road and Route 22.

"I marvel at the way those one-room school teachers survived," she said. "There were no telephones or security. They just opened the doors and the children found their way."

"Teachers emphasized reading and penmanship. Spelling bees between

county schools within our township were popular and very competitive," Estes said. "Classrooms sometimes had a piano in them and we would sing tunes from the 'Golden Book of Favorite Songs.'

"At the end of the school year we would have a big family picnic in the park where awards were handed out

— George Van Hagen



Photo courtesy Barrington Area Historical Society

Waterman School, built around 1886, is a private residence today.

## FLINT CREEK SCHOOL

Old school still holds memories of the pledge & the three 'R's'

Ruth O'Keefe Martin attended school at Flint Creek in the early 1930s. She is the granddaughter of James McGraw who bought the farm on which the original Flint Creek School was built. After this school burned down it was replaced by a red brick

school, around 1935. Ruth remembers that her grandfather bought her a nice coat as a reward for not missing a day of school, and every day they recited the Pledge of Allegiance before starting school and learning their three "R's" (reading, writing and 'rithmetic).



The original Flint Creek School, built on John McGraw's farm, burned down and was replaced by this red brick building around 1935. Today, the former one-room school is a private residence.



Haeger School was built in 1857 and the school grounds included a cemetery. Today the one-room school house is a private home complete with cemetery in the yard.

## HAEGER SCHOOL

Former pupil shares memories

Jean Flock Kelly remembers attending Haeger School, located at Meadow Hill and Spring Creek roads, in "the old days."

"During recess, we used to play in the old cemetery," she said. "Faith Rawson was our teacher. Some of my classmates were Joan Hilton, and the Mead brothers. I used to have to live at Ruth Mead's house on Ridge Road because the roads were so bad in winter, I couldn't get home."

"Ruth was a wonderful friend and taught art at many of the one-room school houses in the area, traveling in her car from school to school. She lived to be 100 and many of her paintings are much sought after in the Barrington area today."

— George Van Hagen

## HENDRICKSON/HUMPHREY SCHOOL

Organ filled one-room school with music

The Hendrickson/Humphrey School was built on land originally given by John Hendrickson and was later renamed Humphrey after a Civil War hero.

It was a one-room frame building of white clapboard in the traditional New England style. It was completely furnished with desk for the teacher, desks for the pupils, blackboards, and hot blast stove.

One of the first teachers was May Andrews from Chicago. She was very progressive and, besides her regular class work, she started a Sunday School.

To aid her, the school district purchased a reed organ which furnished the students with music for many years.

As the harvest season came to an end on the farm, the enrollment at school increased, it held steady during the winter and declined in the spring as the parents needed the children on the farm.

(Source: "History of Humphrey School" by Laura C. Witt, a teacher at the Humphrey, Waterman, Hough, and Grove schools.)



Photo courtesy Shirley Stover Jura

Hendrickson/Humphrey School students in 1937 included: First row — Alice Young, left, Lucille Rieke, and George Krabbe; Top row — Robert Volz, left, Shirley Stover, Lois Young, and teacher Laura Witt. Witt and several of the girls are wearing feed sack dresses. These were popular during the Great Depression and were made from cloth feed sacks that were available on the farm.

## Lifelong lesson

Pearl Olumstad Estes says that some lessons stay with you your entire life.

"I remember on the back of the certificates handed out for perfect attendance and reading, these words of advice which are still good today," she said.

It's hard to argue with her. Here are those words of advice:

- Twelve Things to Remember**
- I. The Value of Time
  - II. The Success of Perseverance
  - III. The pleasure of working
  - IV. The dignity of simplicity
  - V. The worth of character
  - VI. The power of kindness
  - VII. The influence of example
  - VIII. The obligation of duty
  - IX. The wisdom of economy
  - X. The virtue of patience
  - XI. The improvement of talent
  - XII. The joy of originating

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## Directory *Continued from page 99*

located on the southwest corner of Penny and Bartlett roads. Today it is a private residence.

4. **Humphrey School** (also known as the Hendrickson School), built around 1860, was located on Algonquin Road near Witt Road. The building was later moved and became part of a private residence on Penny Road.

5. **Dickinson School** (also known as the Dierck School), built circa 1856, is located

1860 out of cut lumber and remains today as part of a private residence.

It is located on Cuba Road near Old Barrington Road. The original school was named after the White family who owned a farm in this area.

8. **Kelsey School**, built circa 1860, is located at the northeast corner of Kelsey Road and Route 22. Today it is a private residence. It was built on land donated by the Kelsey family who homesteaded in this area.

built circa 1861, is located on Honey Lake Road just north of Route 22. Originally the school had no well, so children had to bring water in their own buckets. Today it is a private residence.

11. **Porter School**, was located on Buckley Road midway between Oak Knoll and Cuba roads. It was moved to Ridge Road and destroyed by a tornado in 1967.

12. **Hager School**, built circa 1858, is located southwest corner of Meadow Hill and Spring Creek roads. An early cemetery is located just west of the school house. Today, the building is a private residence.

13. **Tower Lake School**, built around 1857, is located on the west side of Route 59 near Indian Trail Road. Today the building is a private residence.

14. **Throckmorton School**, was located on the corner of Helm Road and Route 25. The building has been removed.

15. **Donlea School**, located on the east side of Sutton Road south of Donlea Corner, is a private residence.

16. **Lageschulte School** was originally located on the northwest corner of Barrington Road and Route 68. Later it was moved to Plum Grove, and today it serves as a residence.

17. **Bucklin School** was located on the north side of Penny and Healy Roads, east of Bateman Road.

18. **Deer Grove School** was located on Ela Road, between Hillside and Northwest Highway.

19. **New Era School** was located on Higgins Road near Route 68.

20. **Beverly School** was located on the southwest corner of Route 72 and Beverly Road.

21. **Loomis School** is located south of Route 72 and west of the EJ&E railroad tracks on the Sears Prairie Stone development. It was built of red brick and sold for a residence in 1961. It was the last of the one-room school houses to survive in Cook County.

22. **Bennett School**, a one-room school house with bell tower, is located on the north side of Miller Road near Rand Road, and is now a private residence.

*\*Indicates former one-room schools in Barrington Area but not in present School District 220.*



Photo courtesy Barrington Area Historical Society

**White School** as it looks today, remodeled into a residence. The flagpole still stands in the front yard, as it did in 1860 when the building served as a church and school combined. The school bell is still in its tower and the bell rope still hangs in place ready to beckon students to their books. The school room has been retained to actual size as a living room for its new owners, with the original maple floors and decorative tin ceilings still in place.

near the corner of routes 25 and 62. The school was built from country stone found in the Barrington area and is still standing. At one time, much later, it housed the Barrington Hills Police Station.

6. **Jackson School**, circa 1856, was located on Donlea Road near Bateman Road on the old Jackson Farm.

7. **White School**, first built as a one-room log school around 1844, was rebuilt in

9. **Flint Creek School**, located on Miller Road near the junction of Kelsey and River roads, was originally a one-room log building circa 1840 and was once known as the Doulin School. Around 1869, it was replaced with a white frame school, which was later destroyed by fire and replaced with a brick structure circa 1935. Today it is a private residence.

10. **Honey Lake School**,

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