

THIS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPOSAL

(Ed: On March 4, 1952, seven small school districts—most consisting of a single small school—officially became one larger district. This publication has been designed both to celebrate the 50th anniversary of centralization in East Ramapo and to provide an historical perspective. It begins with the text of the original document noting the benefits of centralization that was sent to all homeowners. It also includes reminiscences from some who were "present at the creation," original photos, a look back at the history of schooling in what is now East Ramapo, a glimpse of education in "the good olde days," and much more. We hope you enjoy, treasure, and keep this 50th anniversary special.)

(Ed: Following is the original document sent home urging centralization.)

THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

When faced with a community problem affecting all of us, we like to tackle it in the traditional American way: examine all sides...thrash it out in public, and put it to a vote. That is how, in a democracy like ours, the will of the people determines the measures that will be taken for the welfare of the entire community.

At present, we are concerned with the problem of adequate schooling for the children of seven school districts—Brick Church, Camp Hill, English Church, Pomona, Monsey, Red School, and Spring Valley. To handle this problem in the democratic way, all of you—all qualified school voters in these districts—want to learn the facts involved before we decide on a course of action. That is why this booklet has been prepared.

WHY SOMETHING MUST BE DONE ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

One of the country schools in our neighborhood might become the scene of a tragedy. Feeding on timbers dry with age, a fire would spread rapidly...more rapidly, perhaps, than the children could escape. For this little old schoolhouse is now so jammed with pupils that their desks have to be pushed together, leaving nearly no space for aisles, in a room too small for safety or comfort.

We hope we never have a fire. But the things that create this danger point up

undesirable school conditions in every one of our districts. Our area has grown so rapidly that we have simply outgrown our school system. Today, some of our schools are overcrowded, many lack modern equipment, and a few have wholly outlived their usefulness.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

As parents, taxpayers or voters, we want our future citizens to get as good an education as children in other areas of the state. Yet, we desire the best possible school system at the lowest possible cost. As hundreds of other communities in New York State have discovered, *the best way to have first-rate schools at reasonable cost is to form a central school district.*

If Brick Church, Camp Hill, English Church, Pomona, Monsey, Red School, and Spring Valley pool their resources, we

can all have a much better school system than any one district can hope to afford.

Not only will the costs of the central school system be shared among the seven present districts, but the state will contribute more financial aid. To encourage central school districts, the state offers dollars-and-cents inducements for their formation.

THE DECISION IS UP TO YOU

Under state regulations, the first step in forming a central school district is to send a petition to the State Commissioner of Education. It must be signed by a majority of the qualified school voters in the outlying districts. If, after studying the facts in the following pages, you favor bringing this matter to a vote, you can help by signing the petition that will be circulated, probably some time this month.

HAVE OUR SCHOOLS KEPT UP WITH THE TIMES?

Today's children find it necessary to attend school longer than their parents did. During the last few years, the increase in schooling has been marked.

In 1940, the average young American had completed a bit more than the second year of high school. But in 1947, the average person had another full year of schooling. In 1940, one young person out of every seven had completed high school, but by 1947 the proportion was one to five, and is higher now.

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY

- Before the turn of the 20th century, some schools were open only for a few months each year.
- During World War I, fewer than 25% of adults were literate.
- At the time of centralization, fewer than one in four had completed high school.
- Today, East Ramapo graduates 98% of its students; of those, nearly 90% attend college; and greater numbers are achieving at higher levels than ever before.

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A LOOK BACK, A LOOK AHEAD

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

We celebrate the 50th anniversary of East Ramapo since centralization in the knowledge that we have come a long way since seven small school districts formally joined together.

At the time that centralization officially occurred, on March 4, 1952, the entire student body of the newly-named Ramapo Central School District No. 2 was 2,198. This encompassed the geographic areas known today as the villages of Chestnut Ridge, New Hempstead, New Square, Pomona, Spring Valley, and Wesley Hills, plus the unincorporated areas of Hillcrest and Monsey, as well as small sections of Haverstraw, New City, Pearl River, and Suffern.

The district was so named because Ramapo Central School District No. 1 had centralized in 1940. On August 22, 1973, our district was renamed East Ramapo.

Today, 50 years after our district's centralization, much is different. We no longer have old, small, cramped, inconvenient one-room schoolhouses. In their place, we have modern schools that provide an appropriate educational setting conducive to the teaching/learning process.

We no longer have a single teacher providing instruction to classes of 40. Today, we have smaller class sizes, individualized instruction, the infusion of computers into all areas of education, and current textbooks.

We no longer have students walking miles to and from school, or not attending school because of a lack of transportation. In our rapidly urbanizing area, we have universal busing—which is also provided for students engaged in co-curricular activities, sports programs, and class trips.

The East Ramapo of today does not require one school to have a contract with another in order for students to be able to attend—as used to be required in order for a student to attend a higher-level school without paying tuition. Nor can a student be kept from attending a school simply due to overcrowding.

Since centralization, our district has become a leader in providing an enriched program for the academically gifted and talented, safety nets for those at risk, and a broad range of services for parents and their children. These simply did not exist prior to centralization. Nor did the English-as-a-Second Language program or the special education and early intervention services exist that serve so many so well throughout our community.

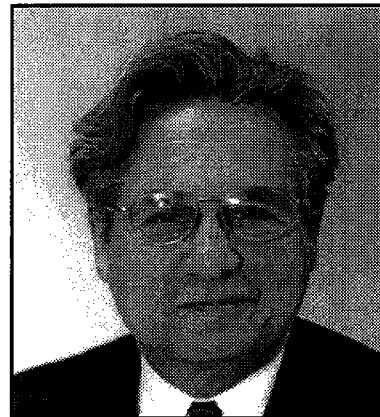
As we look back with great pride in our heritage, we must also look ahead. As challenges existed before, so too do they exist today, as we strive to maintain and enhance the necessary quality programs and services that will empower students to achieve to their highest level of academic performance.

The 50 years behind us were filled with growth, excitement, the vitality of a unique community, and marvelous educational accomplishments. From this district and our community have emerged well-known and respected doctors, researchers, and lawyers; business people, musicians, and stars in the sports and entertainment worlds; those in the helping professions, and those elected as public servants. It is our goal that our students achieve at similar heights and that our educational program is judged to be similarly successful 50 years from now.

As you read through this document, you will be taken back in time to individuals and events that formed the foundation of this great district—not just 50 years ago, but 100 and more. It is our hope that you will find this historical retrospective both informative and pleasurable—and that you will have a fuller understanding of and greater appreciation for the district we proudly call "East Ramapo."



(Ed. note: Mr. Friedman, Superintendent of Schools, has been an East Ramapo administrator since 1976 and a school district administrator for more than 30 years. He assumed the position of Superintendent in January 1998, after more than 15 years as Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education. Mr. Friedman has been named one of the 100 top educational executives in North America, and is widely known for his administrative and supervisory abilities, and outstanding communication and consensus-building skills.)



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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Warm greetings and congratulations to the entire East Ramapo community. Our fifty years of centralization find us celebrating the "gorgeous mosaic of our culturally diverse community. As we continue toward our goal of developing each child to their fullest potential, we find more and more similarities within the various cultures of our families, at the same time appreciating the differences that enrich all of our lives.

The East Ramapo Board of Education is dedicated to providing a healthful and safe place in our schools with a learning environment that respects and honors all of our children and families. We are also committed to enabling each student not only to reach the state's academic standards but to soar beyond them, while enhancing their creativity and honing their social skills.☼



Susan B. Gordon

OUR LITTLE (RED) SCHOOLHOUSE

Small, cramped, mostly unfurnished, difficult to get to, cold in winter, damp when it rained—and those were among its charms! The edifice to which we're referring is East Ramapo's 19th century Little Red Schoolhouse: sparsely furnished, wooden desks all in a row, one chalkboard, one pot-bellied stove—and, of course, one-room. It was a place where as many as 50 children from first to eighth grade were taught by one teacher at the same time, frequently utilizing just one or two books, perhaps a map and pointer—not to mention a dunce cap, stool, and ruler for discipline!

Built in 1873 "for no more than \$800," this one-room school is one of a small number that still exist in their original condition. It contains two additions: one increased its length by 12 feet; the other created an "ell" at the far end. In 1922, electricity was brought in. In the 1930s, indoor chemical toilets replaced two outhouses that had stood behind the school, and shortly after that modern plumbing and heat were installed.

Over the years, the district narrowed the age range of pupils at the school. Beginning in the late 1920s, it began contracting with larger districts for the education of its oldest children. The advent of the school bus made this possible. By centralization, in 1952, only the first three grades remained. Subsequently, and until 1971, it was utilized to house the district's PreKindergarten program.

In 1975, following its closure to students, the schoolhouse was converted to a museum under the direction of Ralph Braden, social studies teacher at Spring Valley High School. Mr. Braden solicited donations, developed a collection of furnishings, books, photographs, and miscellany that form the foundation of today's museum offerings; and gathered a work crew of high school students to paint and fix up the building.

Today, the museum offers an authentic look back in time, complete with old wooden desks, original chalkboard, potbellied stove, 1896 American flag with 45 states, turn-of-the-century books, writing tablets and ink wells, dog-eared records and faded photos, wavy leaded windows and creaky floor boards, and additional memorabilia that make an outing to this wonderful old schoolhouse well worth the time.☼

RECOLLECTIONS

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

By Arthur H. Gunther

(Ed. The writer is Editorial Page Editor of The Journal News in Rockland. He grew up in Spring Valley, graduating from the high school in 1961.)

Those of us who were around when the old Spring Valley School District and other small ones in Ramapo were encouraged to merge about a half-century ago will tell you there was both trepidation and exhilaration. The latter because the powers that be thought there would be more state aid, better use of resources, and more modern equipment and facilities to help the coming school population boom.

Spring Valley, Monsey, Hillcrest, Pomona, and south Spring Valley, all were beginning to see post-World War II housing development, beginning with the Valley View Estates off Union Road and the Kuperman pre-fabricated two-bedroom ranches off

Eckerson Road in Hillcrest.

Albany was rightly concerned that the only true way to continue Regents standards was in combining small school districts in Rockland. Yet there was also some fear. Any time you make something bigger, you worry that you will lose touch with the ground, your roots.

And the Spring Valley District, in particular, was concerned.

It had had a great history, with a most notable superintendent, Guy P.

Rigaud, and a longtime Spring Valley High principal, Leland Rickard-Meyer.

Its staff, including such names as the Rouy sisters, Leo Dustman, Manny Singer, Rocco Fazio, Seymour Weiss, and so many others, remained for years and gave continuity of service.

It was a high-achieving school district, which long had a mix of diverse students, as does the present East Ramapo.

There was worry, then, that consolidation (first named Ramapo Central School District No. 2 and then East Ramapo), would water down the identity. The Monsey people, those in rural Pomona and Brick Church, and the community of New Hempstead (not yet a village) were equally concerned. But they need not have been.

The genius, the drive, the dedication, the uniqueness, the heritage, the staff, the people of the Spring Valley School District and the other merging districts blossomed in a much larger, but most fertile field. ❀



Old Monsey log cabin school, pre-1900.

SPRING VALLEY CLASS OF '51

Ruth Hess

(Ed: What was it like being in the last high school graduating class before centralization? The following is excerpted from an article that appeared in The Journal-News in May 2001. Mrs. Hess is a retired educator.)

As the Spring Valley High School Class of 1951 is approaching its 50-year reunion, so many wonderful memories flash through my mind. How can I summarize 50 years in this limited space?...

Leland Rickard Meyer was our principal at the high school on South Main Street, and he was quite formidable, since he rarely smiled. But we all respected him so much.

There were about 112 graduates in the Class of '51, and we were a close-knit group. Just before our graduation, Leo Dustman, our beloved math teacher (who began at Spring Valley when we were freshmen), said he would not only miss us, but also informed us that we were the best group he had ever taught.

I still think of him with such fondness 50 years later, as I also do about Janet Graham, my Spanish teacher, homeroom teacher and Eta Hi-y adviser. Ethel Remsen ("Remsen Drive" in Monsey), my Latin and English teacher, reminded us in our third-year Latin class that "Cicero wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth." (I guess she thought that we were.)

Some of the other teachers I remember so well are English teachers Amy Ruoy, Jean Campbell Meissner, and Margaret Ruth Thomas; social studies teachers Thomas Sears (who also taught English), Emanuel Singer, Seymour Weiss (loved him and our classmates loved to tease him), Dora Roberts and Clay Baker (his wife was on the school board and also worked in the high school office); science teachers Charles Greenberg (also taught math), Clifford Stalter (we hated to be called up to the blackboard to define the science terms) and Carl Newell (his wife was my music teacher).

We had Jerome Paikin for music (his production of "The Mikado" with many of our '51 classmates was so professionally done); and Ellen Moat, our typing teacher, who played classical

RECOLLECTIONS

music while we typed, and she promptly fell asleep to it.

I owe a great deal to W. Francis Scott, our speech teacher (also drama coach for "Cap and Bells" and adviser to "The Thespians," honor society for drama club members). Under his direction, our senior play, "A Date with Judy," was a huge success. While he scared the daylight out of us, I thanked him many times for his guidance and teaching skills when I became a principal and had to speak before both small and large audiences.

Elma Bird was our librarian, and I loved spending my study hall periods there as one of her library assistants (I still have the book I received from her at graduation.)

While I am eagerly looking forward to our reunion and seeing many of my former classmates, it is with a deep sense of sadness that I remember the many classmates who have died and the several others who are too ill to be with us. They will, however, be with us "in spirit." Go, Spring Valley High! ❀



Keith Appgar



Elma Bird



Leo Dustman



Janet Graham



Jean Meissner



Ethel Remson



Dora Roberts



Amy Rouy



Clifford Stalter

SPRING VALLEY SNAPSHOTS

George Kapral

(Ed. The writer is a former Spring Valley resident and graduate of Spring Valley High School. He now lives in Missouri.)

They say you can't go home again. But "they" are wrong. I remember the Spring Valley of the 1950s and '60s.

A summer's walk down Cole Avenue. A gentle breeze. The shade of sugar maples. Past Dobrowski's Grocery. Left at Luciano's Grocery on Church Street. Cross West Street. Past the Greek Catholic Church on the corner. Continue past the old Stamp Factory. Over the railroad tracks. The Spring Valley Laundry on the right.

To Myrtle Avenue. On the corner, the Black and Silver Bar and Grill. To Madison. The post office on the right. Cullen's Restaurant on the far corner. Go straight. Shoemaker on left. Hit Main. Turn right. Brown's Soda Shop. The Spring Valley Theater. Saturday afternoon. Fourteen cents. Five cartoons. Newsreel. Coming attractions. Triple feature. Candy: 6 cents (1 cent more than Brown's next door.)

Record shop on right - 78 rpm records for \$1. Cross Commerce. Cross railroad tracks. Bruno's Diner on corner. Walk in. Jukebox on left. Pinball machine straight ahead. Counter on right. Ham-

burger: 25 cents; nickel Coke.

Cross Main. Turn left. Plaza Diner on right. Open 24 hours. Home fries. Softball-size muffins. Turn right. Herman's Pool Room: "No minors!" Wink, wink. Sixty minutes: \$1. Itchie's Bar and Grill. Turn corner. Red and Tan Bus Line. Spring Valley Taxi. Blacksmith shop. About face. Spring Valley Police Station.

Turn left. Walk to corner. Turn right. Walk to next corner. Turn right. Barber pole. Haircut: \$1. Snip, snip. Mayor John Balough. Cross Lawrence Street. Bank on corner. Loiterers. Sweaty bottles in brown paper bags. Soda shop on right. Newspaper and magazine rack. Rhythm & Blues News: 15 cents.

Cross alley. Kull's Tires. Stroll in. No room to move: tires, tires, tires. Dark, dank, Dickensian. Best deal in Rockland. Turn right at Church Street. Aroma of baking bread, Widman's bakery. Cross street. Aroma of fried rice and stir fry, Mark's Chinese Restaurant. Cats in window.

Turn right. Milewski's Shoes. Peruna's. Walk in. Shuffleboard on right. Bar on left. Jukebox straight ahead. Frank Jacaruso, bartender. Fifteen-cent draft. Third glass "on the house." North on Main. Shapiro's Clothes. Cross the street. Kaplan's Clothes. 5 & 10 cent store. Tanco's Bakery. Bicycle shop. Continue on. Messenbrink's Meats. the Herb Nobb Diner.

Martio's Pizza, teen haven, teens' heaven. Pizza by the slice: 15 cents. Jukebox. Chuck Berry: "Ya know, I'm almost grown. Yet I'm doin' all right in school. They ain't said I broke no rule..." Frank: good conversation, great friend. Gorgeous wife.

Cross the street. Hardware store. Sign on door. "Call Me Dave." Ramapo bakery. Delicatessen: cooked meats, smoked fish, cheeses, salads, exotic condiments, 50-gallon barrel of dills. Whole pickle: five cents.

North on Main past St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Father McGovern. Father Case: a priest a kid could actually talk to. To corner of Maple and Main. Smulka Bernstein's Luncheonette, Spring Valley Waterworks. West on Maple. A&P on left. Phillips 66 on right.

Cross Union, Myrtle, Johnson Street. Spring Valley Lumberyard on right. Water tower on right. Cross railroad tracks. Cross West Street, Collins Avenue, past Paiken Drive. Left on Cole. Second house on right. 81 N. Cole. Cherry tree in front yard. Grape vines. Purple lilacs. Up back steps. Through lobby. Enter kitchen. Gram at stove. "What would you like for dinner, Georgie?" Kielbasa, pierogi, halupchi, onion rye. Fresh-baked cherry pie. Hugs.

"Home is the hunter, home from the hill..." And the child. ❀

RECOLLECTIONS

POT CHEESE HOLLOW

Franklin Hoffman

(Ed: Franklin Hoffman, a graduate of the Spring Valley Class of '52, recalls a time and place that few remember: Pot Cheese Hollow, a rural area during the 1930s and 1940s now known as, Spring Valley. Along the way he also reminisces about the Spring Valley of the '50s and '60 in which he, and many a Rockland native, grew up, and, of course, about education.)

Among Mr. Hoffman's recollections: in the "old days" there was no bus service, a youngsters couldn't attend classes in a different school district, even if his or her district didn't have the required program, unless the two districts had contracts with each other, and teachers were like second parents.)

Pot Cheese Hollow: a name that serves as a reminder of the rural way of life that has nearly vanished from Rockland County. Many families in the community kept cows for milk and cheese, as well as a way to earn extra money.

The earliest settlers in Spring Valley were farmers, tradesman, and peddlers. The United States was "the land of opportunity," and from New York City Spring Valley was only a train ride away. New arrivals to Spring Valley found an abundance of fresh air, but also a place to live, work, and worship.

Spring Valley became one of Rockland's favorite shopping spots. Business was centered on Main Street, between the Erie Railroad Depot and Maple Avenue.

Some of the family-owned shops on Main Street were Lefkowitz's Butcher Shop, Hellman's Butcher Shop, Garber's Live Chicken Market, Fradin's Grocery, Joseph's Fish Store, Pauline Brown's Ice Cream Parlor, Levy's Plaza Restaurant, Mellion's Butcher-Grocery Shop, and Olitzky's Barber Shop.

Spring Valley became a resort that rivaled the Catskills. Some of the well-known hotels in Spring Valley were Spring Valley Gardens, the Fairview, Singer's, Auerbach's, Bader's, Bauman's, Rosner's, and Gartner's Inn.

Bungalow colonies were also popular, many springing up along the banks of streams and rivers, Lake Suzanne in Monsey and Hyenga Lake in Spring Valley. After summer retreats in the area fell out of favor, bungalows underwent different reincarnations. Some, like

Bader's in Spring Valley became senior residences. A few made the transition to summer day camps, such as Deerkill in Suffern and Deer Mountain in Pomona. Others, like Hyenga Lake, became low-rent housing.

When the Tappan Zee Bridge opened in 1955, increasing the post-war exodus to the suburbs, many bungalow colonies were replaced by modern housing developments.

Prior to 1850, the educational systems in Rockland County were geared to an agricultural way of living. County schools were largely one- to three-room facilities. There were several different kinds of school districts in Rockland County: common, union free, consolidated, and village superintendency.

Common school districts were limited to the first eight grades. There were 27

such school districts in the county. (Ed: Authority within these districts was vested in a sole trustee, or a Board of trustees, a clerk, and a collector.)

Union free school districts differed from common school districts in that they could establish high school courses. There were 10 such schools in the county.

Consolidated school districts were formed by the union of several common school districts, or the union of several common and union free school districts.

The village superintendency was an autonomous unit, under the control of a board of education, which appointed the superintendent and reported directly to the State Education Department at Albany.

Between 1940 and 1970, the 47 tiny school districts scattered throughout Rockland County were combined, updated, expanded, and rebuilt from tiny one-room grammar schools into today's modern centers of learning.

One of those consolidations was what was to become East Ramapo. On March 4, 1952, seven union free schools districts in the Spring Valley area centralized and became known as Ramapo Central School District #2. On August 22, 1973, the name was changed to the East Ramapo Central School District.✿



The entire class, from kindergarten through grade 8, turned out for this early 1900s photo, along with the headmaster, at the original Pignoll School.

RECOLLECTIONS

GRANDMA'S HOTEL

James Walsh

(Ed: James Walsh, a reporter for The Journal-News, was born in East Ramapo. He has sent his children through East Ramapo schools, including a graduate of the Spring Valley Class of '02 and a current 9th grader. Mr. Walsh also has a unique tie-in to East Ramapo, dating back more than 80 years. Here he reminisces about it.)

Where the Grandview Avenue Elementary School stands today used to be my family's homestead. My grandmother, Mary Halloran, moved there in 1920 to a rambling white house that she named the Mountainview House, a combination hotel and convalescent home for New York City carpenters.

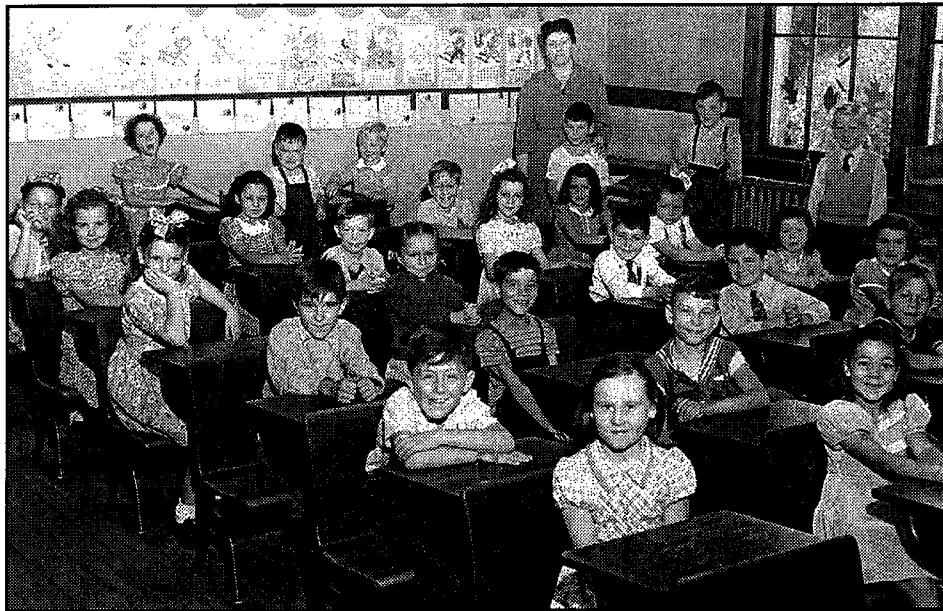
The first person to knock on the front door was the census taker, but it wasn't long before business began to thrive. The hotel was surrounded by 25 acres on which my grandmother kept numerous chickens, a cow named Nancy, and an orchard of apple trees that blended into a neighboring farm.

Nancy would sometimes get loose and wander into the orchards, where she'd consume a massive quantity of apples. Given the cow's multiple stomachs, the apples would ferment inside Nancy, and she'd become a stumbling drunk! That was a problem for my mom, Cecelia, and her brothers, Victor and Jack, who would be sent out to retrieve the misguided bovine.

The carpenters were sent there because at the time doctors felt that people recovering from injury or illness benefited from the fresh air and spring water found in the country. But they soon got bored, and took to the woods, where they cut trees and made furniture. I still have a few of their pieces, and will always treasure them.

My mom had the first car in the neighborhood. Back in those days, the auto salesman made house calls with whatever car a prospective buyer wanted. Mom never left home without telephoning everyone on the street to see if they needed anything in town. Town was Spring Valley, some seven miles away, and

a good half-day trip by horse-drawn carriage or wagon.



This photo, taken in 1951, shows one of the last classes of elementary students at the Camp Hill School prior to centralization. This "new" school was erected in 1923, and accommodated grades 1-6 students until 1956. An older Camp Hill School had been built in 1835 on the site of an encampment of Washington's soldiers.

My uncles went to school in the red schoolhouse on Brick Church Road. Uncle Vic always checked the trap lines he set for raccoon and muskrat before going to class. Years later, he would recall that people always knew where their neighbors were by the position of the sun in the sky. One might be plowing a certain field. Another would be milking cows.

They also knew their neighbors' secrets. A man once came to my grandmother's front door during Prohibition looking for a jug of whiskey. My grandmother told him to go down the road and ask Uncle Sam. A neighbor, you see, who had a still, also had a mailbox that looked like Uncle Sam.

These were days I didn't experience, but I wish I did. The place was sold in 1948 for \$25,000. It was just seven years before the opening of the Tappan Zee Bridge—an event that would bring a quick end to the way of life that my family lived. But if anything was to be built there, we all agreed later, we were glad it was a school.☼



This photo shows a building identified only as a union free school, 1871-1896. It is believed to have been located on the site of the current Food Mart International on Route 59 in Spring Valley.

RECOLLECTIONS

THE SECRET OF CAMP HILL'S QUALITY

Ida Weinberger

(Ed: Mrs. Weinberger was a parent of two children who attended Camp Hill School during the 1940s. At the request of Sylvia Solomon, coauthor of Let School Bells Ring, she reminisced in a letter 30 years later about the education her children received there. Below are excerpts from that letter.)

The small school district #12 represented by Camp Hill School will remain in the memories of those whose children attended the little school and at the same time actively shared in [its] running...

The total school population consisted of 35 children in 1946. My husband and I felt that our two were especially privileged to be part of the Camp Hill experience. Both children learned more and

received more personal attention than in the today's concept of a class room....

The secret of the school's outstanding quality may well have to do with the way it was run. The entire community participated in most school activities. The school board was elected by District 12, and as a rule the two teachers were carefully selected and received good salaries. Camp Hill was the first school to hire a music and art teacher for all grades.

Camp Hill was not a rich residential section, and it was rather difficult for some parents to pay their property taxes. However, personal interest and pride overcame the obstacle. Camp Hill School was also open to the children of our mountain people, who were among the poorest financially.

We more or less sensed that some of our children did not receive adequate

diets. To make up for such deficiencies, the P.T.A. arranged for a free lunch program for all the children. Ten mothers volunteered to cook once a week (2 mothers for each school day).

Thanks to Mrs. Rooney, our school nurse, we received supplies, food, and free dental care for each school child. This was financed by a yearly famous bazaar at Camp Hill School. Because of community effort, we were able to finance the dental program from 1946 till centralization took over.

Needless to say, we wanted to hold on to what we felt was good. However, after a three-year school fight for and against centralization, the outlying districts lost and centralization took place. Because of becoming suddenly a huge school district, the personal touch gave way to modern progress.✿

REFLECTION ON THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE

Ralph Braden

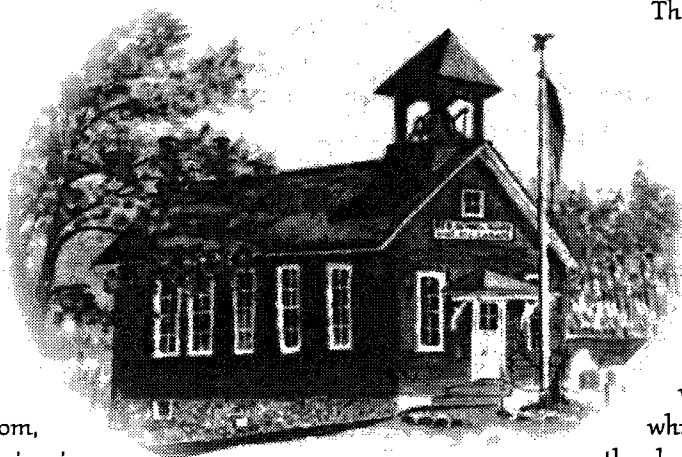
(Ed. Mr. Braden was a social studies teacher at Spring Valley High School who founded the Little Red Schoolhouse as a museum in 1977. He continued to maintain it until his death in 1986.)

As I sit here in the schoolroom, with the red afternoon sun streaming in the western windows, I muse on the possibility that these walls could speak. They could tell us a century of stories of children.

In the autumn of 1875, it was quite a different world. The brown dirt road in front of the school, muddy ruts in the rain, icy snow in winter, were left with imprints of small feet wending their way, and an occasional wagon passing by. There was little to disturb the stern atmosphere of this farm-country school.

Can we visualize the young school marm in long dress, ill-prepared and subsisting on a pittance of a salary, longing for the day when she could marry and leave these lessons behind?

In cold winter days, the major problem was keeping warm, as the cold drafts found their way through the cracks in the walls.



The pot-bellied stove proved little comfort for her charges.

The days were long, from 8:00 to 4:00, and our young school marm was principal, counselor, friend, nurse, custodian, and teacher of all eight grades.

Older students helped the younger, and brought in coal and wood for the stove. Books were few, and each had a slate on which the lessons were done. And they better be right—or a slap on the wrist would send him back to his seat to do it over!

But learn they did—through a combination of fear and trust and respect. Here they might find their life's mate.

The foundation values for a society quite different from today were all part of growing up in a one-room school. They developed pride in their work, their community, and themselves.

The little red schoolhouse on the hill served them well. Come, let us ring the old bell to honor each of them: trustee, teacher, child, and parents—they who will forever remain a part of this much-loved school.✿



