

SCHOOLS IN THE TOWN OF MARSHALL

By Janet Dangler, April 2023

The first school in the Town of Marshall goes back to around 1796, established by the Brothertown Indians. It was approximately where the Boro is now located. Another school was in the center of Dicksville, built by Asa Dick and used as a school and a church, where Amy Marris lives. At this school, according to Ken McConnell, former Town of Marshall Historian, "pupils paid tuition of one quarter cord or good hard wood two feet long, or the cash equivalent." He relates that there was the construction of a fence "to keep the cows out of the play ground." Other schools were at McConnell's Corners, Moore's Corners, Hanover and Forge Hollow. Altogether, there were 11 school districts in the Town.

In the early 1800s, the Knob Academy, which was located on the hill south of the Depot and the Marshall Towpath on the west side of Route 315, was built. It was torn down in 1906. In the 1840s, the West Hill Academy was established on land deeded from John Dean to the trustees of the new school which featured two years of high school. After that, the Deansboro Union Free High School was built on West Hill Road (then known as School Street) where the Ruia's now live. This school went up to the eighth grade; then the pupils were sent to Clinton High School to finish out their education and were transported there at their parents' expense.

The Deansboro Union Free High School burned in 1931, and then came the big question: should the school be re-built; or should Deansboro merge with Clinton or with Waterville? Many public meetings were held to examine the pros and cons of each proposal. Continuing as a separate unit was not considered. The Clinton Central School Board of Education was approached seeking an offer to become part of the Clinton School District. This measure was applauded by some residents of Deansboro, especially those whose children who attended the Clinton schools. The Waterville Board of Education, however, had offered to erect a school in Deansboro at their own expense, accepting the additional cost of part of the deal. The Clinton School District were reluctant at first to construct a new building in Deansboro at Clinton taxpayer expense, but when they were informed of Waterville's offer they made a similar one: agreeing to take Deansboro into their local central district and to build a school there at the same tax rate charged throughout the district.

However, given the fact that many individuals influential in the Deansboro school affairs had business interests in Waterville, the informal vote in April 1931 was 108 in favor of uniting with Waterville, 25 wishing to join Clinton, and 11 undecided. A formal vote followed, with the result of 125 for joining with Waterville and 17 against. The next question was where the new school should be located, and the Miller site on the west side of Route 12B (where the present Town Hall is located) was selected. Work on the new school started in April 1932 for a three-classroom building for students from Grades 1-6, including a cafeteria and auditorium with a stage, to be called the Deansboro Grade School. Pupils for the upper grades were transported by bus to Waterville.

The contractors hoped the new school would be ready for September 1932, but classes there didn't actually begin until March of 1933. All the small area schools were closed, and the children were transported to school in either Deansboro or Waterville, whichever was closer. What is now the meeting room in the Town Hall was the First and Second grade classroom; the offices of the Town officials used to be the third and fourth grade rooms; and the present main library room housed the fifth and six grades. What is now the children's room of the library was called the principal's office, and a cot for sick children was there as well as a small library. Once a week a music teacher and a gym teacher traveled from Waterville. Lunches were prepared and served by Mrs. Rexford Johnson (helped by enthusiastic fifth and sixth grade students) on the stage at school. There was

a very strong, active PTA. Sadly, the last class graduated from the Deansboro Grade School in 1966. It was then used as a kindergarten and the grade 1-6 children were bussed to Waterville until 1970. In 1975, the Town of Marshall purchased the school for \$1.00 and moved the Town Offices there. Then everybody from kindergarten to grade 12 went to Waterville. Reorganization plans for combining the Brookfield, Madison, Oriskany Falls and Waterville school districts into one combined district was discussed in 1969 but, other than Oriskany Falls joining the Waterville Central School District, that didn't happen.

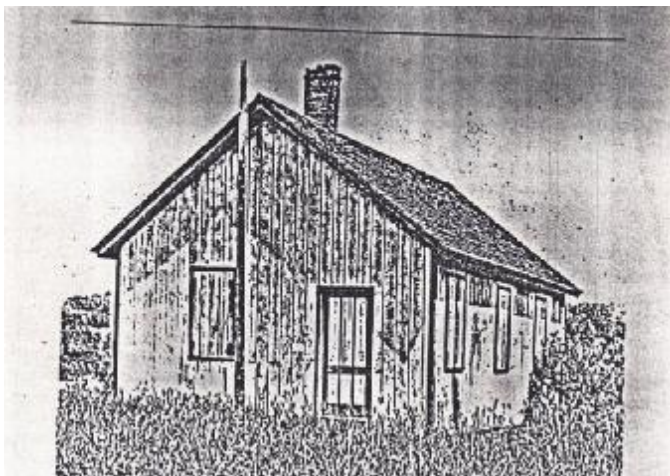
It's fun to imagine how different everything would be if the vote in 1931 had gone the other way!



District #1 – Corner Bush-Maxwell & Ford Roads



District 2 - Daytonville



District 4 – torn down 1919



District 5 – Corner Route 315 & Burnham Rd.



District 6 - Hanover



District 7 – Corner Green & Brothertown Roads



District 8 – Gridley Paige and Shanley Roads



District 9 – Forge Hollow (Cobblestone School)



District 10 – Route 12B



High and Elementary School – burned 1931

