

FOCUS

Harrisburg Area Museum

Recall the past--imagine the future

Issue 2019-9

THE ONE ROOM SCHOOL



The School with the Chapel on the right

The Museum's School was never a real school. But it is a fair replica of the basic schools around here in the first half of the Twentieth Century.

I remember four local schools...Brandon, Center, Diamond Hill and Rowland (Where I attended grades 1-8) The Museum's School is oriented N/S while all the others are E/W. I think the orientation was intentional with the real schools because it allowed windows down the North side so light could come from the students left. That was supposed to be better. But the Museum's School fit better this way on our plot.

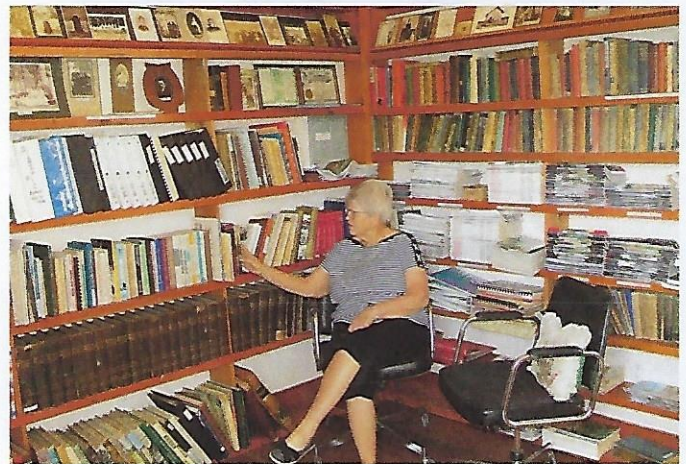
I don't remember much about the interior of the Brandon and Center Schools. But the Rowland School had the main entrance on the West. The teachers desk was at the far East end and the Library in the NW corner.



Phillis Watson, Teacher at her desk

Notice the Black Board behind Phillis. At Rowland they extended all the way (Except for doors) across both the East and West ends of the room. From waist high to as high as a teacher could reach.

The student desk shown in the lower right is typical of the day. They came in several sizes to accommodate various size kids. The one shown is about medium size. Some were wider to allow two students to use the same desk. Rowland had a few wide desks but I don't remember that two students were ever assigned to them. Not sure how that would work on a continuing basis!



Phillis in the Library. Most of our books are old study books. We do have a set of encyclopedias.

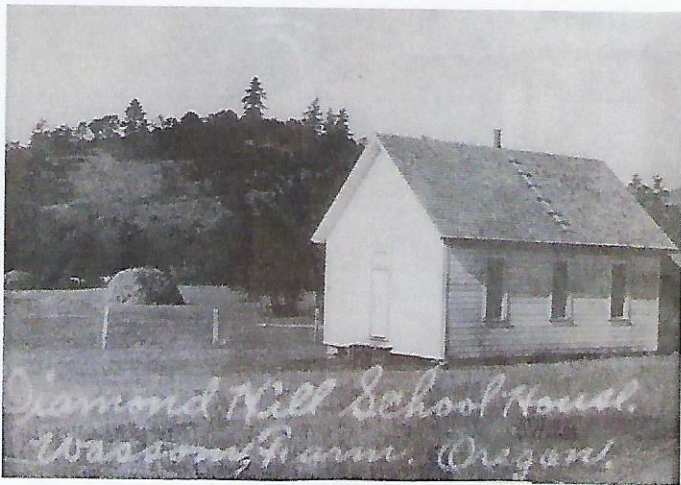
I think most of the schools had a decent library. With quality fiction as well as lesson material. So far as "readin", ritin' and 'rithmatic" is concerned we were at least on an equal with the "big" school in Harrisburg. We were polite and courteous but somewhat retarded in regards to other social graces! And we didn't have a clue about what the rules were for basketball! Most of that

was soon corrected once we got to High School...

A reasonably good pendulum clock was pretty much standard issue. I don't remember about chimes on the hour etc. I suspect that if our clock had chimes they were disabled!



There are a lot of class pictures and diploma's exhibited. Good chance you will recognize someone if you take time to study the historical documents.



Diamond Hill School

Diamond Hill School set along the foothills East of Harrisburg. If you look closely you can see a bit of a road in the lower right corner of the picture. That is what we now call Diamond Hill Dr. The road turns left just beyond the school and is then Gap Road and it goes clear to Brownsville. Note "Rattlesnake Butte" in the background. It was a rich source of rattlesnakes in the Spring after the weather warmed up. Some of the local boys enjoyed hunting and collecting them!

This is a fairly small school. I am pretty sure I have never been in it. It sets E/W but has windows on the South. Maybe the North too. I think the entrance is on the other end.

I remember when the rural schools were consolidated with the city schools. It was merged with Harrisburg and small portions with Harris and Halsey districts in 1950. Very controversial and with quite a bit of bitterness among some of the rural citizens. The Mennonites were particularly opposed and were allowed to retain a school district (Harris). It seems to me that there were both gains and losses in the consolidations. The consolidated school was no longer "My School"...and now it is no longer "Their School" but is essentially controlled by the State, a situation where honest people can disagree!

None of the four schools I remember had electricity, flush toilets, central heat etc. But this was OK...few of the students had those things at home.

We had "recess" ever so often. If the

weather was anywhere near decent we would all go outside and play at something. Noon recess was longer so more organized games were practical. We played "Annie, Annie Over", "Kick the Wicket", "Work up" (softball) and several other games. At Rowland we had a nice Play Shed with a slide and swings inside. A "Teeter Totter" was much used. One of the girls or a smaller kid would get bounced off the Teeter Totter occasionally but I don't remember any serious injuries. One boy fell off the slide and broke his arm. (I think he was climbing up the slide instead of using the ladder)

We would set down on a square of wax paper that our lunch was wrapped in, and then slide down the slide. Do that a few times and the slide would take a polish that meant high speeds goin' down! Let kids "Be Kids" and they will find something to do.

As I wrote this I remembered a LOT of things from those days. But those memories do not seem appropriate for the Museum publication. If you would like a copy of what I wrote, send me an email: grass-seed@peoplepc.com with "School?" In the 'subject' line and I will send you a copy.

I hope you will visit the Museum soon and spend some time in the 'One Room School'...