



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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The Little Red Schoolhouse

Did you know that North Greenbush has the only active one room schoolhouse in the county? In fact it may be one of the few such buildings in the state. It's the North Greenbush Common School District No. 1 or the Little Red Schoolhouse as it is better known.

Education was always important to the residents of this town. The first settlers were Dutch and school was taught by the pastors of the Reformed Churches at Blooming Grove and Wynantskill. It wasn't until the mid nineteenth century that State Law allowed public taxation for funding of schools.

The "Little Red" was built in 1861 on land deeded to the school district by Peter M. Defreest and his wife Gitty and Ruger Vandenberg and his wife Helen. They owned the farm land in the vicinity. In fact the Vandenberghs lived in what is now the Country Grove, adjacent to today's schoolhouse.

There is some question whether this was the first schoolhouse in the neighborhood. The 1854 Rogerson Map of the County shows a school house on the west side of the Troy Road at the north corner of Glenwood Road.

Nevertheless, it's the "Little Red" for which we have records. In the early years, students attended from kindergarten to eight grade with one teacher. We have a copy of a teacher's contract from 1907. Miss Jordan was hired to teach 32 consecutive weeks commencing on September 9 at a compensation of \$8.50 a week. She must not have had a teacher's union representing her because she was granted two weeks of unpaid vacation "during said term".

There are many former students living in the area who have fond memories of their schooldays. Helen Gardner attended school there from the third to the eight grade. There were about twenty five students and most of the students sat two to a desk. Everyone had their own inkwell. When the teacher wanted to get the class's attention, she would whack her ruler against the stove. Helen lived close enough to school to ride her bike home for lunch during the good weather. During winter she ate at school with the other students.

Bev Sliter recalls school recess. They would go out and play in the adjacent Williams family horse and cow field. Of course you had to be very careful where you stepped, she says. If you have school stories, call me at 283-6384.

When students graduated from the Little Red, they continued their education at the Wynantskill School, Averill Park, East Greenbush or Troy. They often excelled at their new school, due in part to the individual attention they had received. However they had to get used to bigger classes.

Today there are 23 students in K through second grade and they are taught by Ms. Caruso and Ms. Lillis. The tradition of our one room schoolhouse carries on.