

Westford Recollections

Stony Brook No. 2-1822

By Mrs Chas S Kennedy

In 1822 a brick school house was built on Stony Brook Road (on the present William Taylor land) near the spot where the flag pole now stands. The original pump is still there and the water continues to flow from it. A picture of the building exists, showing the pupils - one of whom was Samuel Taylor. Records state that \$150 was paid to Mr Taylor for repairs on this old school. In 1870 this building was replaced by a new school (now occupied as the home of Mrs William Taylor). It is near the sight of the original school.

The Town Report ending in the spring of 1871 gives a record of the expenses for the Stony Brook School.

Stony Brook — \$1800 appropriated
DIVISION
OF EXPENSES

For land from Samuel Taylor	\$ 25.00
Deed	25.00
Stone	59.85
Labor	20.00
Howe's bill for building school-house	1122.00
Howe's bill for painting school-house	97.00
Seats	241.00
Building fence	55.00
Freight bill on the seats	1 44
Stove and fixtures	27.00
Four settees, chairs, etc	23.81
Committee expenses	
T.H Hamblett	49.00
E.E Haywood	33.00
U M Chamberlain	9.00
Balance Labor Total	\$1800.00

In other words, they spent every nickel of the ap-

propriation. The committee expenses were for actual labor. This was the same year that \$9,296.08 was appropriated to build the Town Hall.

The present owner of Stony Brook School No. 2 is Mrs William Taylor, mentioned previously as the teacher at the Center School for grades 1 through 4. She and her husband remodeled the building so that it hardly showed any resemblance of a schoolhouse today. Mr Taylor attended the school as a boy - in the days when the janitor got \$3.00 a term for chopping wood.

Miss Lucinda Prescott attended the school from 1895-1901 and relates the following tales. There was a board fence around the school and the children were forbidden to go over it - but they often did! There was a shed for coal and wood, but it was not attached, as many were. She remembers going to school and skating on the icy crust - no one was satisfied with one slide, so they went back up the hill again and again, never paying attention to the fact that they might be late.

There were about 25 to 30 pupils at this. On the 19th of April they went in a horse-drawn carriage to the Concord parade.

The teacher's desk was on the raised platform, but was taken down for the Christmas tree. The desks were single, with cubbyholes. Mrs. Taylor still has a few of them and I, myself, purchased a school desk at an auction in Bolton, Mass. in the summer of 1967 and was delighted to find engraved on the bottom "Stony Brook School No. 2."

Miss Prescott said that the Stony Brook School closed in 1908, the year the Frost School opened. When she still attended Stony Brook School, the area where Frost now is was nothing but a wet cow pasture and one had to jump from hummock to hummock or else get wet feet.

Even the roads in the late 1870's were bad. If it rained, they were a mess of mud; and if the weather was dry, the dust would be almost blinding. Many

roads were narrow often covered with brush and stones. In 1878 a law was passed forbidding people of Westford to deposit stones on the road. There is a record of an early spring washout on Lowell Road, near the No. 2 Schoolhouse, which made the road impassable for some time.

It is interesting to see the arithmetic courses prescribed for grades 1 through 8 in the Westford schools at this time:

Grade 1 — Numbers 1-10, fractions $1/2$, $1/3$, $1/4$. Other Grades — Apply combinations taught to most familiar weights and measures. Use of pennies — 2¢ pieces, nickels and dimes. Rates and proportions. Longitude and time. Taxes, insurance. Custom House Business. Stocks and Bonds. Decimals applied to work of carpenters and masons.

A practical course for those not going on to the Academy - of whom there were many.

Next week will be featured recollections from Old Forge Village School No. 3.

THE STONY BROOK SCHOOL 1870-1970

"Still sits the schoolhouse
beside the road,"

Ever facing the rising sun;
Above the pines on Frances
Hill

As a new day is begun.

Then to the south, the
maple tree
Ever casts its cooling
shade,

And just beyond Little
Tadmuck Hill

The Stony Brook Valley
is laid.

From west to north
where mountains show
And sunsets the priceless
gifts,

Come autumn gold or
winter snows
God's handiwork displays.
One hundred years have
come and gone
And some hearts remem-
ber still

The Stony Brook School
that became a home
On the side of Frances
Hill.

Written by Elizabeth Cushing Taylor, April 1970, to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the Stony Brook School No. 2.