



WHAT TODAY APPEARS unremarkable as a comfortable family residence began as the Stony Brook Schoolhouse in 1870. It later was purchased by W. Reuben Taylor and his wife Elizabeth Cushing Taylor, who was educated there, and transformed into their home.

(Staff photo by Marc Holland)

Stony Brook Schoolhouse No. 2

By June W. Kennedy

The following is the third in a series on Westford schools by resident June W. Kennedy, author of 'Westford Recollections', a series of historical vignettes and photos.

“S till sits the schoolhouse eside 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 hardwork displays

One hundred years have come and gone And some hearts remember still

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

The preceding verse was written by the late Elizabeth

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

It was she and her husband, W. Reuben Taylor who remodeled the school and made it their home.

“And some hearts remember still” days spent at the Stony Brook Schoolhouse No. 2 — not, of course, the original 1822 brick school, but the structure which replaced it and now remodeled bears the date of 1870 on its gable end.

Since 1908 no children have shared the dipper, but the original pump still stands and the water continues to flow from it.

Miss Lucinda Prescott attended the school from 1895-1901. She and others shared the following tales.

Lucinda Prescott: “I remember going to school and skating on the icy crust — no one was satisfied with one slide, so they'd go back up the hill again and again, never paying attention to the fact that they'd be late. There was a board fence around the school and the children were forbidden to go over it — but

they often did!

There were about 25-30 pupils when I was there. Our desks were single, with cubbyholes. The teacher's desk was on the raised platform, but was taken down for the Christmas tree. The teacher took care of the 'boughten' things; we had to make the decorations. Sometimes strings of cranberries, but usually strings of popcorn from our place.

“There was some scraffin' amongst the stringin' at our place, but if we said we'd do it, Mother made sure we did. On April 19th, we went on a horse-drawn barge to the North Bridge and to the Concord parade. It cost us 50 cents a piece. Left at 9 o'clock and got back about 5. It was quite a day for the class.”

Clyde Prescott: “There were seven grades and one teacher, Miss Anna Miller. She was there for 10 years; she got \$300 a year for teaching. Every year she had a party for the students at her home on Pawtucket Street in Lowell. The whole school went on the railroad train.

“I remember we used to hang

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May baskets for her; she'd come out, chase us around and catch us. There was a shed at school for coal and wood, but it was not attached as many were. I was the janitor for the winter term. Got \$10 a year; only \$5 a year for the other fellow for the combined spring and fall terms.”

George Perkins: “We'd celebrate Christmas and Valentine's Day with little pieces to say. You thought you were something saying those pieces. When I was only 10 or 12 I was the janitor at the Stony Brook School — up at 5 o'clock and walk through a snowstorn to build the fire. Not like today, a vacation if there's a sprinkle. I also remember the belt in the face or the back of the head if you whispered.”

The vocabulary from a rather shop-worn arithmetic book used at the Stony Brook School seems quaint. Then it was not just the addition of apples and oranges, but firkins of butter, kegs of molasses, chauldrons of coal, boxes of chestnuts, a pound of candles and casks of wine.

And now for a sampling from that Stony Brook schoolbook.

Example: A boy went to the confectioner's and bought three cakes of gingerbread, for which he gave a cent a piece; two buns, for which he gave three cents a piece; one custard for four cents and one orange for six cents. How many cents did he spend for the whole?