

Turn of the century memories: Minot's Corner schoolhouse

District School No. 6 transformed into home

Editor's note: An article on Toy's Turkey Farm, appeared in the Nov. 23 Eagle. Hyman Toy's home was originally the Minot's Corner schoolhouse. Local historian June Kennedy offers readers a glimpse into that part of Westford's past.

By June Kennedy
Special to the Eagle

The only Minot's Corner district schoolhouse with-in memory of the older people of Westford is a part of the Toy Turkey Farm on Route 1110. In 1873, \$2,007.14 was appropriated for this one-room school.

Miss Ruth Tuttle spent one of her first teaching years, 1902-1903, here at District No. 6. She gave the following account: "The building had two small entry halls — the boys entered through one, the girls through the other. The pipe from the pot-bellied stove ran the length of the room. The wood was neatly

stacked in the shed; it was the teacher's duty to keep the fire going. Often I would have my mind so intent on my lessons that I would forget and let the fire go out. The pay was \$8 a week. Grades 1-6 attended here. In 1902-1903 there were only 11 pupils."

Minnie Whitney Perkins, one of those 11 pupils, relives her happy childhood hours at this country school: "We all walked to school, sometimes through high snowdrifts. At Christmas we decorated the tree with paper chains, popcorn and cranberries. The teacher gave a box of candy to everyone. We were tickled to death. I remember one time I brought a pretty hanky to the teacher for a gift. At the Christmas party we all had to recite pieces on the platform.

"The old-fashioned desks had a hole cut in the right-hand corner for the ink bottle; the desks were screwed to the floor. One of the teachers, not Miss Tuttle, kept a

strap in the cloak room; it was used unmercifully on a truant boy. Teachers were to have authority over behavior on school grounds. I remember at recess we used to play games like hopscotch, tag, hide-and-seek. Sometimes we'd play blind-man's bluff or maybe have a game of jackstones."

Minot's Corner School closed in 1908 with the opening of Frost School. Minnie related that in 1915 she and her husband could have bought the old school for \$500. Her name was still on the blackboard. At this time the school was renovated and made into a home.

As the land owned by the Toy family was prepared for Westford Valley Marketplace, the family home (Minot's Corner Schoolhouse No. 6) was moved a short distance away to Fieldstone Drive. The building is still occupied as a private home on that site.



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The Minot's Corner Schoolhouse opened in 1873, and closed in 1908 when the Frost School opened.