

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REMEMBERING THE OLD MAPLE SCHOOL

In looking over some old copies of the Franklinville papers published in 1878, Charles A. Perley recalled his days attending the school. The school I recall very vividly, as in it I had my first introduction to the elements of deportment and training, which the youngsters of those days had to through in gaining the education that was to guide and help them through the intricacies of the life ahead. The old school stood on Maple Avenue, just across the street from the home of the present editor of the paper, Mr. Stout, on a roomy lot, probably 400 feet along the street front. The building was a one story barn-like structure with two rooms, entered by a door on each side of a woodshed at the front. In later years, the building was enlarged by construction of additional rooms on the front, to care for the growing army of youngsters that increased with the growing village population.

The student desks were home-made of quite heavy boards, yet well done by the home carpenter, and were painted with dark red paint. The students all faced the teacher, whose desk was somewhat modern and on a platform about six inches above the floor. The blackboards were the board wall themselves, painted black for the purpose, and at a reasonable height for the standing student to work upon, with his or her problems, ideas and a piece of chalk.

The building was heated by a big cast-iron "box" stove in each room, into which slabs of four foot wood were occasionally fed by the teacher, or perhaps, by one of the "big boy" students, when the teacher was busy. The seemingly large woodshed in the front part of the building, was piled full to the roof with these slabs when the school opened in the fall, but I recall that by the spring the boys found it a pretty good place to spend recess to play, for the wood was by that time pretty well gone.

George E. Towne was the "master" in the main room on the north side and Miss Belle Robinson was the teacher of the primary students in the south room, when I entered this school in 1875 or 1876, when I was nine or ten years old. From this published report in 1878, the student list appealed to me promptly. There is not a name among them that the lapse of time has tarnished. Others, whom I studied under at this primitive old school as the years passed were: Marvin Older, a well-known citizen of the community, in his day; Fred J. Blackman, later a prominent lawyer and judge; and Squire Hayden, who became the school superintendent and served many years as the District Superintendent of all districts in this part of the county. I also recall Miss M. Franc Little, (Postmaster of the Franklinville Post Office for many later years) and also Grace and Hattie Simonds, the Laine sisters, Lena Palmer, Miss Saunders and many others who left the impression of good and strong personalities with the students of the school. In 1878, the school numbered 58 students with Hattie A. Lane, teacher and Fannie Adams, assistant.

These memories of Charles A. Perley were taken from the Marjorie Graves Scrapbook and dated August, 1941. This article was contributed by William Watkins, Deputy Historian of Machias.

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A letter from Miss Hattie Chapman Adams, dated August 5th, 1941 was also discovered in the Marjorie Graves Scrapbook and contributed by William Watkins.

Dear Editor:

In reading Mr. Perley's letter about the Maple Avenue District School reminded me that, I too, was a pupil there (of course it was before Mr. Perley's time). When I began at the age of 7 years, back in 1868, there were only two rooms and only one occupied, the one on the west side. I have nothing but memory to go by, but they had no man teachers, only in winter. We had no sidewalks, or paved roads shoveled smooth as our kitchen floors, but mud and snow drifts, nearly knee high to plod through.

One year they used the room on the east side and we had Miss Alice Raub for a teacher, an aunt to Merle Raub, I think. I will attempt to recall the teachers' names: George Boyce, George Towne, James H. Waring, who later became District Attorney, and Alfred Spring, who was Supreme Court Judge, at the time of his death. The lady teachers were: Tennie McVey, Annie Giles, Maggie Giles, Libbie Robeson, Alice Raub and Belle Burlingame, mother of E.A. McClouth.

Some of the pupils were: William McCluer, William Weed, Charley Weed, Emory Chapman, Ira Burlingame, James Hogg, Wilson Hogg, Eddie Button, Frank Riggs, Miles Riggs, Lawrence Fries, Eugene Adams, James Henry, Wallace Blackman, Artie Blackman, Clarence Blackman, John Sackett, Jerry Sackett, Fred Whitney, Ezekial McKinley, and Arthur Spring. The girls: Jennie Hogg, Ida Davis, Florence Davis, Nora Hoff, Kit Woodworth, Flora Bigham, Lousie Gleason, Dana Whitney, Nett Whitney, Cora Waring, Arie Chapman, Mary Henry, Maggie Henry, Agnes McKinley, Jennie McKinley, Annie Wade, Fannie Adams, Grace Skinner, Fannie Perley and Hattie Chapman.

When more room was needed they added three more rooms, making five, and when they discontinued classes, it was closed and made into five dwelling houses on Maple Avenue.

(The 5 houses made from the old school are still standing on Maple Avenue. The school dated back to the 1850s.)

Submitted by: William Watkins, Deputy Historian of Machias