

# Legato School: A Centennial Souvenir



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LEGATO SCHOOL:

A CENTENNIAL SOUVENIR

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Fairfax, Virginia  
January 1976

## LESSON XXXIV.

blāze          pūt          yēt          house

fire

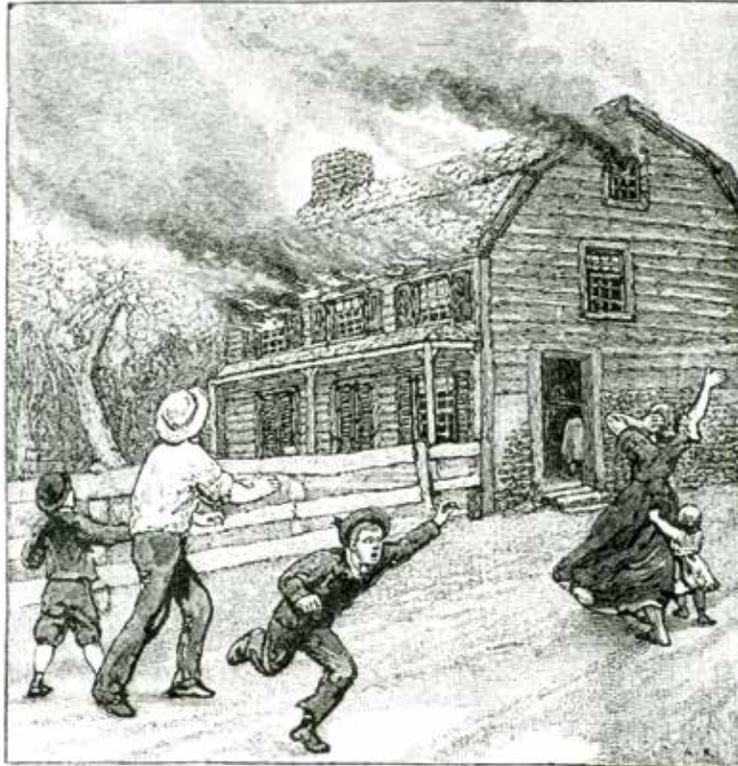
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call

rīng

wē

z



This house is on fire.

Look! the roof is in a blaze.

Run, boys, and ring the bell.

Call some men to put out the fire.

We may yet save the house,  
if we work hard.

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Writing and additional research were accomplished by John Gott, Kathryn Hogan, Robert McKenney, Virginia Peters, Edith Moore Sprouse, and Tony P. Wrenn. Documentary photographs are from those gathered by Mr. McKenney's committee. Additional photographs and copy work were provided by Wm. Edmund Barrett, Lee Hubbard and Andy Wolfe. Diane Early, Paul Erlenborn, David Givens, Walter Gomez and Wendy Nicholas, all students or former students at Woodson High School aided immeasurably in research, organizing material and other related activities.

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We wish to thank the many interested persons who contributed their time, materials, knowledge or work to the Legato Restoration and to this report.

The Editors



#### NOTE TO THE READER

The intent of this report, written in early 1972, is to provide basic architectural, archaeological and historical information on the Legato School, and the context in which it was built, operated, and phased out as a school. It should not be viewed as a definitive history of the Legato School or of Public Education in Fairfax County. The editors feel that the information presented here is the minimum which ought to be available to those planning the restoration of the building which was the Legato School. Based on this information, we have formulated recommendations for accomplishing restoration and upkeep and for developing use programs.

Unless based on fact, restoration programs have little chance of presenting a viable historical and architectural project to the public. All restoration programs should involve an intensive program of documenting, in drawings and photographs, the structure as it stands when acquired, as well as a search of both historical and architectural material on the structure to be restored before plans are made for restoration.

Tony P. Wrenn  
Virginia B. Peters  
October, 1975



## PREFACE

While there had been some small and scattered free schools in Virginia, primarily for children of the poor, the first Public Free School System in Virginia was not established until 1870. Since 1970 was the Centennial Year, the Fairfax County School Board in 1969 appointed a Centennial Committee to plan and conduct appropriate activities to commemorate this noteworthy event.

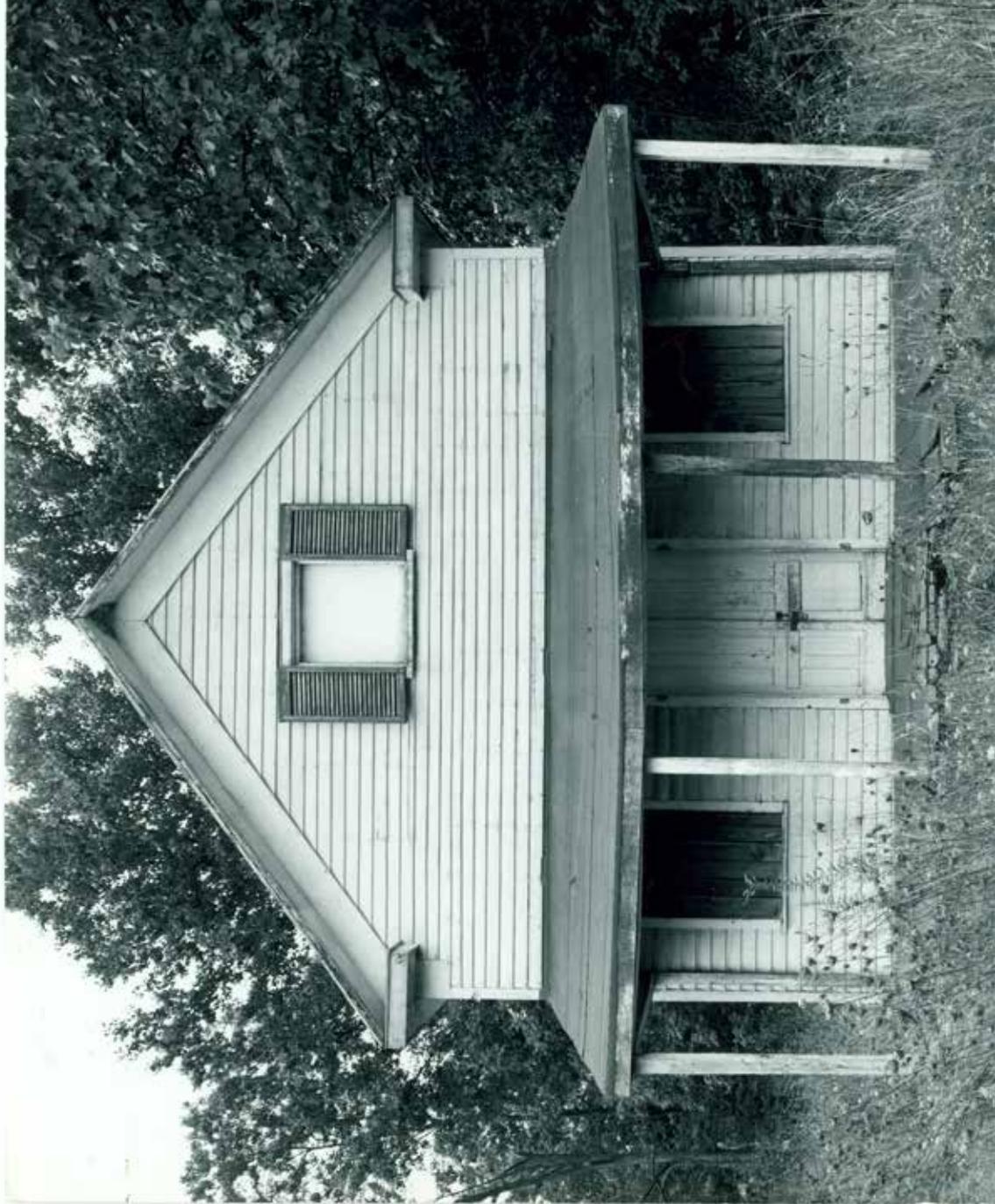
In its early meetings the committee cast about in search of worthwhile projects. Speakers appeared on many public programs in the County. Releases were given the press. In many schools teachers and pupils did research and prepared and presented programs using books and other teaching materials which had been used in early public schools. The pupils acting the parts of teachers and pupils of that day with the aid of parents, who cooperated wholeheartedly, found or made appropriate clothing to create the atmosphere of the old one-room school. These programs were shown to pupils in the schools and to their PTAs and were well received.

The committee felt that, in addition to these activities, it should undertake a more material and lasting memorial to the one-room school of yesteryear. It decided to undertake to have the old Legato school house moved from its original site on Lee Highway between Fairfax and Centreville to the Court House grounds in the City of Fairfax. The Board of Supervisors was found to be most receptive to the proposal and granted the committee's request to have the building so located. Sufficient funds were received from interested citizens, PTAs and other groups to purchase the building from its private owner and move it to its new site. It now stands on its new fieldstone foundation on the southeast corner of the Court House grounds facing Route 123.

Available records pertaining to one-room schools and particularly those pertaining to Legato have been searched. Building materials, furniture and school equipment of that era are being sought and, as found, incorporated in the building to recreate the Legato of 1876 in a new setting.

It is the desire of the committee that this building and its contents serve as a memorial to the early and difficult struggles of the people of war-devastated Fairfax County to bring educational opportunity to all its children and its children's children. It is expected that it will serve not only as a memorial but also a museum so that our people may see and better understand the rather primitive beginnings of the excellent public school system of today.

W. T. Woodson  
Superintendent Emeritus  
Fairfax County Public Schools



Legato School on its original site, 1969, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett.

I.

PROGRAM, PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY, AN INTRODUCTION

By Virginia B. Peters

In March, 1969, the Fairfax County School Board established a committee to make plans for the proper observance of the one hundredth anniversary of public education in the state of Virginia. W. T. Woodson, superintendent of Fairfax County Schools from 1929 to 1961, and Mrs. John E. Onesty, former school board member, were named co-chairmen. With the rest of the Centennial Committee, they set nine goals (see Appendix II). The first was "to establish a school museum in a restored and refurbished building centrally located, and under constant surveillance to prevent vandalism." The Legato School on Route 29-211 between Fairfax and Centreville was chosen as the most desirable since it was one of the few remaining complete school structures of the 1870's still standing. The building was purchased for \$2000, moved from its original location, and placed at the junction of Route 123 and the access road to the Massey Building in the City of Fairfax.

The Legato "Dig" and Subsequent Student Research

In August, 1970, Robert McKenney, who had been collecting material for a history of education in Fairfax County, approached me about taking a group of students to the original site to do an archaeological survey before the building was moved. With a core of seniors who had worked with me on the Dranesville Tavern dig three years earlier and a few new recruits (see Appendix I), we undertook an examination of the area surrounding the school.

Both Donald Early, father of one of the students and an amateur archaeologist of wide experience, and my husband were as faithful as the students in their attendance each weekend that we worked and both shared the responsibility of adult supervisor with me. Ray Strang, now an architecture student at the University of Virginia, took his surveying equipment to the site and established a datum point or bench mark by which the location of any finds could be established. Andy Wolfe, yearbook photographer at Woodson High School, photographed the exterior of the building as it appeared when we began the work.

Other students, with scythes and rakes, cleared the ground around the building so that work could begin. A great many items of recent origin were lying on the surface. Since these were objects obviously left by persons who had lived in the house after it was changed into a family dwelling, they added nothing to our knowledge of the building as a school. Likewise, a trash pile behind the outhouse yielded great numbers of bottles, tin cans, plastic and ceramic remains of very recent origin. Automobile license plates dated the trash pile from the 1950's.



Hand-hewn timber above rear foundation of Legato School, photograph by Andy Wolfe.



Woodson High School students, Anita Wilburne and Rian Liedelmeyer, during archaeological salvage program, 1970, photograph by Andy Wolfe, Woodson High School.

Trenches were dug from the front corners of the building outward about 10 feet (level with the bench mark) and from points A and B – positions corresponding with piles of rock, brick, and rubble which had apparently served as foundations of a porch. It now seems highly probable that those foundations upheld the original, low, wooden stoop. A picture taken in 1923 partially confirms this. No artifacts of value were found in the ground. In fact, although the entire area in front of the building was uncovered, it proved to be sterile. An interview with Earl Brown, a student at the school when it closed, revealed that the era of the Legato School was one of extreme austerity. There was no playground equipment to deteriorate on the grounds, no abandoned toys or sports equipment, no lost coins dropped by a careless child. The students who attended the school had no such luxuries.

#### Other Sources of Historical Information

Since the digging process brought few tangible rewards, the students sought other sources of information. The finding of one such source occurred quite by accident. The Legato School was located on Route 29-211 directly across the highway from a small restaurant. One warm September day, Alex Cramer and Paul Davis crossed the street to buy refreshments. The woman behind the counter knew the name and address of a woman who had been a student at Legato – Mrs. Alvin Sherwood who lives on Lee Highway. She directed us to Mary Elizabeth Balderson who also attended the school. The two of them in separate interviews reconstructed a fairly complete picture of the building – inside and out – as it existed from 1916 to 1929. Earl Brown, subsequently taped by a group of students at Woodson High School, also contributed details.

Our best source of information about the one-room school was W. T. Woodson, who became Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools in 1929. Prior to that he had been one of two County school supervisors whose responsibility was to visit schools, so he had been in most of the one-room schools in the County while they were still in operation.

Another source of information about the Legato School was the School Board minutes. These are not complete, but seem to have been scattered among the personal effects of various school board members. Some were turned over to the County, but some have never been recovered. Diane Early, Paul Erlenborn and Walter Gomez assisted me in reading all of those available and in abstracting references to the Legato School. Information from other Centreville records was gathered and supplied to the committee by Edith Moore Sprouse. From these records, we pieced together a list of teachers at the school (see Appendix V). The list is fairly complete from 1906 until 1922 when the School Board minutes stop listing the appointment of teachers. The central files of the Fairfax County School Board go back only to 1929 in this matter, leaving a twentieth century gap of seven years – 1922 to 1929 – for which there is no documentary material. Students who attended the school think

that the teacher at Legato for this period was alternately either Miss Mary or Miss Lillian Millan. Records covering teachers at the school during the nineteenth century could not be located.

Basic to much of this report and highly valuable in giving a picture of the typical one-room school and the process of education that went on in these buildings, was the material collected by Robert McKenney, Kathryn S. Hogan and others (see Appendix I). This data consisted of newspaper clippings, deeds and other photostated documents; pertinent books, magazines, and printed matter; letters and oral interviews with people who either taught in or attended one-room schools; and a bibliography of sources pertaining to education in Fairfax County. Many of the old photographs used in this report were collected by this group.

#### Sources of Architectural Information

Finally, the building itself and the few others remaining in the County were studied to gain knowledge about the one-room school. In the fall of 1971 Tony Wrenn met me and the remnants of the archaeology group not already in college and went over the building with us. He discussed architectural features of the structure from the roof to the foundation. He also spoke to vocational students at Woodson High School and their teacher, Oscar Baughan, as well as to members of the Legato School Subcommittee about the process of restoring old buildings. For this purpose he used his experience and the pictorial record made while studying the Dranesville Tavern.

One of the most pleasant parts of the research involved driving about the back roads of Northern Virginia looking for other schools of the Legato vintage. My husband and I visited the little red school-house\* on Route 15 which has been restored and furnished in an appropriate manner by Wilbur Hall of Leesburg, Virginia. David Givens spent one day directing us to old schools in Loudoun, Fauquier and Fairfax Counties and finally, Diane Early, David Givens, Tony Wrenn and I visited a number of these schools. At each one, we took photographs and made notes on architectural features of the buildings. It was through this survey that we discovered the basic pattern for the one-room school. Marshall School on Route 55 is in the best condition; Belle Aire has been gutted by fire; the outlines of Oakton must be extracted from the general store which has been built around it; and Navy is now a family home. But all of them share many basic elements. Based on the study of Legato and other one-room schools in the area, Tony and I made a list of recommendations for the restoration of the school.

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\*The Mountain Gap School at Oatlands is now owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Woodson High School students working on restoration of Legato School, 1972, photographs by George Hamel.



The school building and roof are rejoined on the new site.

## Guidelines of the Centennial Committee

One of the guidelines of the Centennial Committee was to involve students as much as possible in centennial activities. It was because of my deep interest in this aspect of education that I agreed to conduct the archaeological survey and later to head a subcommittee for the restoration of the school. From the beginning the project suffered from lack of funds, and I felt that if County school vocational students could be involved in the restoration, a large bill for labor could be eliminated and the experience would give the students a sense of participating in history. In addition they would be MAKING history while they learned their skills on an actual restoration job outside the classroom laboratory. As a teacher at Woodson High School I hoped to work with the school and the committee in involving vocational students in doing the actual work of restoration. With the help of Charles Blanton, my supervisor; Robert Simms, supervisor of vocational classes; William P. Ladson, principal, and of Lois Godla, supervisor of vocational training for Fairfax County, plans were completed to use student labor. Permission was received and technical details for their protection while off campus provided so that Oscar Baughan and his students from Woodson carpentry class could begin work in the fall of 1971 (see Appendix I).

The students replaced worn siding and filled in the spaces which had been made when two doors were cut into the back of the building; they scraped and painted the building. They began work on the window sash. In the meantime the Fairfax County Vocational Education Foundation, Inc., was formed to finance construction of houses by students in the building trades classes and work was begun on one house in Annandale and one at Wolf Trap Farm. This took Mr. Baughan and his classes away from the Legato School project, but William S. Simms, Sr. undertook to continue the work with his maintenance and repair classes (see Appendix I). Mr. Godla also enlisted the aid of special education students under Leo Kerin of Stuart High School to build walkways.

Early in 1972 Janice Sullivan, representing the Fairfax Ferns Garden Club, joined our subcommittee and offered the funds and services of her club to landscape the area around the school.

## The Restoration

There is no question but that the Legato School when finished should present a creditable example of the typical one-room school of its era. But from the beginning the machinery for accomplishing this task was cumbersome. The Centennial Committee placed the Legato project under the general supervision of the Department of School-Community Relations whose chief at the time was Ross Tucker. He left just as the sub-committee was being assembled and the responsibility fell to George F. Hamel who has continued with the help of Dorsey Baynham and William A. McGinnis to handle the publicity, fund raising, and clerical

work of notifying members of meetings and keeping records. Much of this work has been done by Jacquelin Pinson and Gertrude Loughborough. The construction work on the rebuilding of the school has been handled by Edward R. Moore, Jr., chief of school site acquisition and development. All other planning and work has been done by volunteers. In spite of communications difficulties and delays which seem inevitable when progress depends on the spare time of busy professional people, the work of rebuilding the school has moved slowly but steadily ahead.

The school has, in fact, been practically rebuilt for two reasons. When it was closed in the summer of 1930 it sank into oblivion and was not heard of again until sold to R. Buckner Winfield at public auction on April 15, 1939. Mr. Winfield converted the school into a dwelling by lowering the ceiling and putting partitions in the large room, building a stairway to the second floor, adding a kitchen at the back and enlarging the porch on the front. It was the purpose of the committee to restore the building to its earlier form by removing all additions and alterations imposed on the building by the Winfields. Furthermore, when the school was moved from its original site to the one in the center of Fairfax, the roof had been removed in order to facilitate movement through heavily traveled streets criss-crossed by power lines and traffic lights.

By the time the subcommittee for the restoration was created, the decision to move the building had been made and the front porch and back addition had been torn from the building. From that time the plans and procedures evolved by a process of trial and error, hampered by a lack of funds and a well-defined plan of operations. In time, the methods which should have been employed from the start began to emerge. As a guide to any group or community planning to undertake a similar project, I would like to offer a plan which could avert some of the difficulties we experienced and eliminate some mistakes which we made.

Henry A. Judd, restoration architect, has suggested one rule for any group involved in any form of historic preservation or restoration: "Don't do anything at all until a restoration architect has been consulted!" What happened to the Legato School has been a living example of the wisdom of that rule. The subcommittee had functioned for over a year before outside advice was sought, so that when Tony Wrenn agreed to help in a study of the building to see how best to restore it properly, the following had already been accomplished:

1. The building had been moved from its original site. While the reason for this is explained in the goals of the Centennial Committee, much of the "feel" of the era and all the feel of the area has been lost by removing the building from its natural setting.

2. In removing the parts thought to have been added by the Winfields and in replacing the old roof with a new one the following sins



Legato School is moved in two pieces to its new site, print Fairfax County Public Schools



Past and Present. Legato School arrives at its new location in front of the Massey Building, Fairfax County Public Schools print.

of omission or commission had inadvertently been committed:

a. While photographs of the exterior had been taken by a student when I became involved, none had been made of the building as it was found. Fortunately, Wm. Edmund Barrett had photographed the exterior of the building some years ago, so that omission could be remedied, but the photographs of the interior taken by a student had not "come out" so there was no record of the original location of the chimney or belfry and this evidence had been destroyed when the old roof was replaced.

b. Most of the original glass was destroyed when the windows were removed to repair the sash. This has been remedied by the work of David Givens who has collected enough old glass to complete all the windows.

c. All doors, and the shutters on the windows at the time the building was moved, were not retained.

d. Some wainscoting and other interior detail had been removed.

e. The front door sill, with its evidence of wear and use, had been lost.

f. A new porch had been constructed which bore no resemblance to any earlier porch.

g. The outdoor toilet had not been moved at the same time as the school. (This structure has not been irretrievably lost as it is still standing on the original site.)

As time went by, it became apparent that the subcommittee for the restoration of the school was divided in its philosophical attitude toward the work underway. The members who represented the school system, and who had been doing most of the work, were laboring under the assumption that their purpose was to recreate a building so that it could evoke, for students who existed in the sophisticated and complicated system of today, a feeling of the simple austerity of the past. Those members who came mainly from the History Commission began as time went by to express concern that the building was not being authentically restored.

The problem of finishing the walls brought the controversy to a head. Mr. Moore had managed to acquire at no cost the plaster board necessary for repairing the walls. Putting plaster board in place was a relatively quick and simple process well within the capabilities of the students. Most members who attended the committee meetings had decided to use that procedure, though some felt that the walls should be replastered. Others pointed out that this would require more expensive

materials and specialists to install. Several committee members felt that those who came to view the one-room school as a museum would not know the difference between plaster and plasterboard. The historians insisted that that was an argument for plaster, so that young people might be shown the difference, and that the original wall material should be restored.

At this point Tony Wrenn was contacted and the process of studying one-room schools in the area began. Those in favor of plastering won out – especially since a contract to do the job for \$621 was obtained. But by that time all of the old plaster and lath had been pulled off the walls and efficiently hauled away in preparation for installation of the wall board.

#### A Word of Caution

It is now easy to see that a committee for the restoration of the building should have been assembled and that the committee chairman should have thrashed out with the members all matters of philosophy regarding the function of the restored building, the process for restoring it, and its location, before the building was touched.

First, did the possibility of providing better security for the building outweigh the losses sustained when the school was moved from its natural setting? Second, should the school be repaired with modern materials and techniques, or should those methods and materials employed when the school was first built be used? Third, was the school to be furnished in the style of a certain decade and then left as an exhibit, or was it to be used as a place for meetings, art and craft exhibits, concerts by students, and other "live" activities? If it was to be furnished as an exhibit, which of its five decades should be chosen to represent the school? No doubt equipment and furniture changed somewhat from 1878 to 1928. Fourth, no matter how faithful to the nineteenth century the reproduction of the building could be, such twentieth century innovations as heat, air-conditioning and humidifiers would be necessary if valuable old furnishings and books were to be maintained in the building or if people, conditioned to require these necessities, were to use the facility.

Although members of the committee and many other persons working for the Centennial Committee had gathered materials, it was not until we began the study from which this report evolved that all of the material amassed by many persons became really useful.

Thus, to any one person or group of persons commissioned to preserve an historic landmark in the local community the following general rules will make the job easier and create a more accurate finished product:

1. Assemble a committee of people who are sincerely interested in the project and are willing to attend meetings and perform other time-consuming chores.

2. Choose a chairman who is not only enthusiastic, but is knowledgeable and has some authority to ensure that decisions of the committee are carried out.

3. Consult a specialist in historic preservation to guide the committee in first studying the context in which the landmark should be restored and preserved and secondly in determining purposes, objectives and restoration principles. In plain English, have a complete plan for restoration and a clear idea of the uses to which the restored landmark will be put before anyone touches the building to be restored. In the end you will find this saves money and time.

4. Look for people, printed records, and archaeological evidence that may increase knowledge of the building and its history. From this data, draw conclusions about how best to proceed with the restoration and prepare a written plan to be followed.

5. Do not remove anything from a building without first making certain that it is not part of the original; if materials are removed from a structure, identify and save them in case they may be needed to answer questions about the original building. Use as much of the old building as possible and, where departures from the original materials or methods are made, record these carefully. Use great care in handling materials removed.

6. Photograph the structure, inside and out, as it stands when acquired and photograph each step of the restoration. Keep a record of the work done, the materials used and the persons who did the work.

7. Involve high school and college students in both the research and the restoration whenever possible – both because of the value of the experience to them and because of what their enthusiasm and creativity can contribute to the work. When doing this insure that students are guided and instructed by someone knowledgeable in historic preservation.

8. A written report, including all of the data acquired about the building and outlining plans for its restoration, is very useful in keeping the committee in charge and everyone else working on the project on the straight and narrow path of authentic restoration. Careful recording of every step of the restoration can be useful to future historians or persons involved in historic preservation and a landmark authentically restored and carefully documented can be "a thing of beauty and a joy forever" to all involved in its preservation and subsequent use.

## Conclusion

In detailing some difficulties we encountered and relating the mistakes we made, I make no criticism of anyone connected with the Legato School. We were all dedicated and interested amateurs who worked hard and achieved much. I have included these remarks in the report because I hope that this document will provide not only a history of the Legato School and general information on education in Fairfax during the era of the one-room school, but that the record of what we have done here in Fairfax County can be a guide to other communities who wish to attempt a similar task.

## II.

### FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL – A BRIEF HISTORY

By John K. Gott and Katherine S. Hogan

#### Early Education in Fairfax County

The first settlers in Northern Virginia lived on large land grants along the rivers and were widely separated from their neighbors. Travel was difficult and roads few, but by barge and boat, up the Potomac and other navigable streams and by horse or coach, over the King's Highway from Jamestown and Williamsburg, the colonists brought with them the English concept of education. The law required that indigent and orphaned children be taught the rudiments of learning, the Christian religion, and a good trade. Many early teachers were clergymen and the schools were apprentice schools conducted in the home or shop of the master to whom the student was apprenticed.

One of the functions of the 18th-century parish, the ecclesiastical division of a county or area, was the overseeing of orphans. The vestrymen "bound out" boys to some reliable and recognized artisan in order that they might be taught a trade, and fitted to make a living. The arrangements were matters of formal contract. "Masters" were authorized to demand regular hours of supervision work and proper performance of duty from the apprentices; but they were themselves required to furnish their wards with decent food, ample clothing, and suitable lodging, along with religious training and instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and such other subjects as were deemed necessary to make a young man proficient in his special trade.

By 1780 the Fairfax County area was being settled by owners with smaller land holdings. Mills of various sorts, tanneries, blacksmith shops, wheelwright shops and stores were established. Their owners and operators realized the value of education, and in one way or another they got it. The apprentice system still existed and the practice of having tutors in the home was common. Sometimes a community school was made possible through the generosity of some gentleman who built a schoolhouse on his land, employed a teacher, often an indentured servant, for his own children and invited other children in the neighborhood to share the privileges which he was prepared to offer.

#### The First Education Act

The first Virginia general school law, known as "A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," was introduced in 1776 by Thomas Jefferson, who believed that education was the duty of the state. Jefferson's bill met the same fate as did most taxation of the time, though a more permissive version of the bill was passed in 1779, leaving the initiative to each county. The Alexandria Gazette on April 22, 1797 published a letter from "A Customer" questioning the necessity of following the law which required that "each county shall be

divided into sections of such convenient size that all the children within each section may daily attend the school to be established therein." The letter-writer estimated that 20 schools and 20 tutors would be required for Fairfax County and that the amount to be paid the tutors (\$200 per annum each) or \$4,000, plus 20 schoolhouses "including the materials (all of which must be paid for) and the workman's wages, at the most moderate computation would cost \$200 each" or a total of another \$4,000. He further predicted that the County would be burdened with the enormous expense of \$8,000 exclusive of the price of the ground, and exclusive of firewood, cutting and drawing it, and necessary repairs to the schoolhouses. He asked the aldermen of Fairfax County whether the advantages expected from this law would be adequate to the expenses incurred and inquired whether it was prudent to be making whimsical and speculative experiments at a time when the country was involved in such serious difficulties. Would it, he asked, not be more prudent to exercise the power the law gave of suspending its operation at least until the impending storm blew over and give the next Assembly an opportunity of revising the plan or adopting a more rational one than that proposed?

This seemed to reflect the feeling of the times toward public education and Jefferson commented in 1816:

The experience of twenty years has proved that no court will ever begin it. The reason is obvious. The members of the court are the wealthy members of the counties and as the expenses of the schools are to be defrayed by a contribution proportioned to the aggregate of other taxes which everyone pays, they consider it a plan to educate the poor at the expense of the rich.

Throughout the era public education in Fairfax County lost support because of private schools already in operation in the County, in Alexandria and in nearby Georgetown.

#### Early Schools in Fairfax County

Local records and traditions afford a meager amount of data from which a history of the schools of Fairfax County prior to 1870 can be produced. The County certainly had schools of a public character. Some of them were supported by the Literary Fund, and designed to give free tuition to all indigent children. William Brent, Jr. offered a "seminary" education at Sully in 1825. In 1835 Henry Fairfax advertised in the National Intelligencer "a female school" to be opened at his residence, Ash Grove. Virginia Cary, of Norfolk, was in charge of the school and its offerings included "all the branches of education usually studied in the best female seminaries in this country." How long this seminary was in operation is not known, but judging from the list of references it had the support of many prominent local citizens.



Cover of Payson, Dunton and Scribner's National System of Penmanship, exercise book used in Fairfax County Schools.

*Ku Kuns Knur Knur Grim Grim Gu 16*  
*March 29 1886*

Page of writing completed on March 29, 1886.

Other schools in the County during the early 19th century included the one at Lewinsville kept by the Rev. William Maffit, later known as the Lewinsville Academy and conducted by the minister at the Presbyterian manse; a boarding school opened in 1836 by Marian Wilmer, wife of the Rev. William H. Wilmer, and known as Howard School until 1839 when it became the Episcopal High School; and the Fairfax Institute which was operated from 1838 to 1849 by George A. Smith, an 1821 graduate of Princeton and one-time editor of the Southern Churchman.

In 1810 the Literary Fund had been created by the General Assembly as the basis for supporting free schools for those children who were unable to attend private schools. By act of the General Assembly "all escheats, confiscations, fines, penalties, and forfeitures, and all rights according to the state as derelict, shall be set aside for the encouragement of learning." In 1816 the Federal Government refunded to Virginia the loans made for the prosecution of the War of 1812, which amounted to over a million dollars, and these went into the Literary Fund.

This fund was directed by the Legislature to provide schools for the poor of every county of the state. A board of directors was created to invest the funds, collect the interest and disburse it as directed by the General Assembly.

Since the law clearly stated that its purpose was education of the poor, many parents resented the stigma of being so classed and refused to permit their children to attend these schools. In spite of shortcomings, these schools provided many children the opportunity of learning to read and write and made many people aware that a state free public school system could be effective and beneficial.

#### Early Public Schools

Initially, money from the Literary Fund could not be used to build schoolhouses and "Old Field" schools were established. These were usually simple structures built by the community on land exhausted by tobacco cultivation.

In 1829 the General Assembly instructed the counties that, of the monies received from the Literary Fund, wages were to be paid first, 10 per cent could be used for buildings (provided parents paid three-fifths of the cost) and 5 per cent could be used for books.

The earliest known count of schools in the County comes from the Literary Fund Report of 1828-29, which showed 26 schools but did not give names or locations. From the column of "The Rambler" in the Evening Star of October 10, 1920 we have reports of two early locations: one, the log school on Colchester Road sponsored by the Joseph Wiley, Richard Trice, John Haislip and John Reardon families; another near the present Cranford Memorial Church, with John Harrover as the teacher.

The log Rochford School predated the structure on Ox Road in Lee District. The Popes Head Road school, although moved, still stands as part of a residence.

#### Expenditures for Public Education

In noting the total amount "expended in educating poor children" in 1832 and 1833, and considering that the Literary Fund provided approximately five cents per day for each student for about three months of the year, it seems that Fairfax County could not have educated a high percentage of its children.

A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, by Joseph Martin, published in Charlottesville in 1835, noted that the amount spent in educating poor children in Fairfax County in 1832 was \$435.50 and, in 1833, \$440.70.

Centreville, deriving its name from its central position, equidistant from Leesburg, Middleburg, Warrenton, Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria, had a population of 220 and includes 1 common school and a well organized Sunday School.

The Gazetteer also noted that Fairfax Court House Post Office, population 200, 140 miles from Richmond, and 28 miles S.W. by W. of Washington, had one common school.

The Literary Fund Report for 1839 showed that 25,965 poor children in the State were sent to the common and Lancastrian schools of the counties and towns during that year. In Fairfax, out of 500 poor children, only 234 attended its 21 schools. The County received four cents per day per pupil or a total of \$630.67 for the year. Some books in use in the primary schools in Fairfax for the year were: Comley's Spelling Book, Murray's English Reader, and Jess' Arithmetic.

The word "pauper" appears repeatedly in reference to schools. In 1841 Henry Ruffner, president of Washington College (later Washington and Lee University) called a series of conventions to study the questions of public free schools. At one of these meetings, he presented a carefully prepared paper entitled: "A Plan for the Improvement of the Common Schools in Virginia." The paper contained the principles upon which his son, William H. Ruffner, later organized the first state system.

The public monies spent on paupers by the Overseers of the Poor in Fairfax County exceeded the amount spent on all other public functions by 1842. In 1845 the General Assembly passed laws giving each county the power to establish public free schools and to levy a school tax. In a few counties a school tax was voted and improved schools established. This was the first public school system not limited to the poor, since

. . . any white child between the ages of 6 and 21, resident in a district, may attend and be instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, and geography and when it is practicable history, the elements of physical science, and such other branches of learning as the said board may require.

Fairfax County took advantage of the provisions of the Act. In the Court Minute Book of 1842-46 we find the following: "In pursuance of the Act of the General Assembly amending the present Primary School System, this Court proceeded to district the County." The court defined 22 districts and appointed 22 commissioners of education, providing the framework for a public school system. A Superintendent was to be appointed in the year 1846. The 22 districts, according to the act, were determined "with due regard to population." The County Superintendent was authorized to act as clerk and treasurer of the Board and enjoined to require strict accounting of finance and school attendance from the individual district commissioners. He could, moreover, demand from teachers accepting "state pupils," information regarding their curriculum and method. He was instructed to visit and supervise the schools of the County. An allowance of two and one-half per cent of all money expended for education the previous year was allowed him as compensation.

At this time county superintendents in the larger counties received as much as \$25 and the school commissioners \$10 annually. The commissioners, one for each district, together constituted a corporate county board of education. Each had to provide for the enumeration and registration of all poor children in his district who under previous enactments were entitled to free tuition. From the 22 Fairfax commissioners, James Hunter was appointed Superintendent of Schools.

#### The Civil War Era

The end of an era came in 1860. In the next ten years, Fairfax County experienced many traumas. Old ways were overthrown by the turmoil of war and reconstruction, creating more changes than the two previous centuries had brought. Although Fairfax had been a county since 1742 the population in 1860 was only 11,834. In the 1830's and 1840's an exodus of once prominent families had taken place to the more lucrative areas of the southwest - Missouri, Kentucky and regions west of the Mississippi River. Lands in Fairfax County had been exhausted by continuous planting year after year without crop rotation. The despoliation of natural resources had also taken a toll, and the institution of slavery was legally practiced.

Slavery fostered social and political thinking detrimental to the development of free public education and favorable to the belief that

education was a duty of the family and the church. Even though the concept changed somewhat after the Revolutionary War, this belief was still held by the planter class (a small percentage of the population) which controlled the government until the Civil War and public education was generally limited to pauper schools and private schools.

Fairfax was the "No Man's Land" of the Civil War with both Union and Confederate armies marching back and forth across the countryside. It lay scarred and bare before the post-war regime which instituted Reconstruction.

### The Underwood Constitution

When the Underwood Constitution, framed by the Convention of 1869, was signed on July 11, 1870, Fairfax County was already preparing changes in the County government to include free public schools. Fairfax was still a rural county with 13,000 people living on farms and in pockets of population scattered in a half-dozen small towns. Roads were few and followed the ridges of the gently rolling hills to avoid fording the many creeks which flowed in every section of the 437 square-mile area.

"An Act to Establish and Maintain a Uniform System of Public Free Schools," Article VIII of the Underwood Constitution, provided for a State Board of Education with a State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The first State Superintendent was Dr. William H. Ruffner, whom many credit with being personally responsible for the ultimate success of free public schools in Virginia. Under the new system each county had a Division Superintendent, appointed by the State Board of Education and confirmed by the Senate. Three trustees for each district, whose only qualification was "the ability to read and write," were also appointed by the State Board of Education. These trustees served staggered terms, one acted as chairman and one as clerk of each district. Their duties were to:

Enforce school laws	Check the school census
Hire and fire teachers	Call meetings of parents when necessary
Suspend or dismiss pupils	Arrange votes on school taxes
Supply textbooks for poor children	Manage all school property

The Division Superintendent's duties were to:

- Explain the school system to the citizenry
- Arrange votes on additional appropriations
- Examine teachers
- Organize district boards and attend their meetings
- Visit schools
- Hear and settle complaints
- Keep records
- Receive reports from districts
- Make reports to the State Board of Education

R. L. Nevitt was appointed April 16, 1870 to divide the County into townships "with a view to the proper subdivision of these townships into school districts." The six townships were:

	AREA	POPULATION		
		1870	1900	1910
District I – Centreville	64 sq. mi.	1,721	2,167	2,311
District II – Lee	60 " "	1,346	1,681	1,909
District III – Mt. Vernon	65 " "	2,233	3,033	3,343
District IV – Falls Church	44 " "	2,461	3,935	4,076
District V – Providence	72 " "	3,136	3,923	5,118
District VI – Dranesville	82 " "	2,055	3,841	3,779

The first District School Trustees are listed in the State Board of Education, Record of Proceedings, Book 1, pages 13 and 14 as:

Fairfax County (October 28, 1870)

Centreville District:	James P. Machen	-	3 years
	George W. Lee	-	2 years
	H. C. Newman	-	1 year
Lee District:	R. L. Rochford	-	3 years
	James H. Rice	-	2 years
	Silas Mayhugh	-	1 year
Mt. Vernon District:	R. L. Nevitt	-	3 years
	E. E. Mason	-	2 years
	F. F. Triplett	-	1 year
Falls Church District:	D. McC. Chichester	-	3 years
	Robert F. Roberts	-	2 years
	B. F. Shreeve	-	1 year
Providence District:	H. C. Fairfax	-	3 years
	Jonathan Magarity	-	2 years
	E. Van Slyck	-	1 year
Dranesville District:	John F. Swink	-	3 years
	Isaiah Brady	-	2 years
	William H. Bates	-	1 year

Mr. Thomas M. Moore took the oath of office as Division Superintendent of Schools for Fairfax County on September 26, 1870.

Under the provisions of the 1870 constitution no funds were stipulated for implementing the public free schools and the twin evils of prejudice and poverty plagued public education from the beginning. For a half century public schools had meant charity schools. Many people objected

Public Free Schools of Virginia.

TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE.

GRADE No. One.

Commonwealth of Virginia.

COUNTY OF Stafford

It is hereby certified, That Miss M. C. Millan having passed a lawful examination before me, this 30th day of June, 1887, and having furnished satisfactory evidence of Capacity, Good Morals and General Fitness, is hereby authorized to teach in the Public Free Schools of Stafford County, during the year ending July 31, 1888, unless this Certificate be annulled.

EXAMINATION MARKS-100 Maximum Grade.

Reading, . . . . .	<u>96.00</u>	United States History, . . . . .	<u>100.00</u>
Spelling, . . . . .	<u>83.22</u>	Virginia History, . . . . .	<u>100.00</u>
Writing, . . . . .	<u>85.10</u>	Theory and Practice of Teaching, . . . . .	<u>95.28</u>
Arithmetic, . . . . .	<u>86.66</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>93.23</u>
Geography, . . . . .	<u>100.00</u>		
Map-Drawing, . . . . .	<u>100.00</u>		
Grammar, . . . . .	<u>86.00</u>		

Given under my hand, this 6th day of July, A. D. 1887

M. R. Hall  
County Superintendent of Schools.

Teacher's Certificate, Miss M. C. Millan, 1887, teacher at Legato School

to the word "free" and there were many who felt this "luxury" could not be afforded.

The 41 Fairfax County schools listed in the first report of the State Superintendent were generally log, though a few were frame, and one was brick. There were 28 white and 13 colored schools with a total of 44 teachers. The average male teacher's salary was \$29.66, while female teachers earned \$27.09 per month.

The minutes of the Districts unfortunately were not all turned over to the School Board and are incomplete in sequence of years. Since those handwritten records that are now in the possession of the School Board list the schools and teacher appointments by numbers for the white schools and alphabetical letters for the colored schools, the identification of actual schools is difficult. Hopkins' 1879 Atlas, compiled from actual survey, shows where schools were located but does not differentiate between public and private schools.

Under the new system parents petitioned the district to start a school, and had a great deal of influence on the location, often providing the land, the school room or house, and making contributions of time, money and labor. Teachers, appointed by the district trustees, were often located by the parents and boarded in a patron's home. Problems of discipline or complaints about teachers were heard before the trustees and the Superintendent.

Teachers were "certified by examination" by the Superintendent through answering such questions as he felt necessary. It was not until 1905 that the State Board of Education supplied the examination questions for certification. Certificates were issued in Grades 1, 2, 3, depending upon the degree of preparation of the teacher and whether the certification was for one year or longer.

Some of the first textbooks prescribed by the State were Holmes' Speller, Reader, and History of the United States; McGuffey's Readers; Venable Arithmetic; Maury's Geography.

While the State provided books for indigent children other students had to supply their own. Families passed texts down the line from child to child, and children often had to share a book.

#### The System Changes

School funds after 1871 came from three sources: interest on the Literary Fund; poll tax (varying over the years from 40¢ to \$1 for males); property tax (between one and five mills); and County funds voted by the people.

On May 13, 1872, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors took the following action to provide additional county funds:

Whereas the County School Board had recommended an assessment of 7 1/2 cents on the one hundred dollars of the value of real and personal property in Centreville Township, as a school tax for said township and whereas the Township levied a tax of .05 cents on the hundred last fall (1871) which has not yet been collected, it is ordered that the assessment on Centreville Township for 1872 shall be 2 1/2 cents on the hundred dollars assessed. Be it ordered that the several townships of the County make the following collection on the \$100 value of real estate and personal property for the support of the schools in the township on constructing school houses.

Centreville	2 1/2 cents on \$100.00
Lee	5 cents on \$100.00
Mt. Vernon	2 1/2 cents on \$100.00
Falls Church	7 1/2 cents on \$100.00
Providence	5 cents on \$100.00
Dranesville	5 cents on \$100.00

By August 5, 1872 all Fairfax County district school taxes had been raised to 7 1/2 cents (except Dranesville, which remained at 5 cents), with the additional Capitation Tax of 50 cents on each male over the age of 21.

On September 2, 1874 the School Board drafted a resolution to the State Superintendent of Instruction informing him of a petition then circulating calling for the removal of D. M. Chichester, Fairfax County Division Superintendent. The Board unanimously favored his retention, citing his "efficiency, indefatigability, and unbounded feelings toward free schools." Mr. Chichester noted in his own defense that "there are still many enemies of the system but the desire for good schools in every neighborhood seems to be stronger than ever."

In 1875 townships were abolished and local school districts redrawn to coincide with magisterial districts. A County Trustee Electoral Board (composed of the County Superintendent, Commonwealth's Attorney, and the County Judge) appointed district trustees for the schools and served as a Board of Appeals.

Members of the Fairfax County School Board on November 18, 1876 included:

R. L. Nevitt	J. H. Rice
G. A. Gordon	E. E. Mason
Alfred Leigh	J. W. Sewall
B. F. Shreve	Blinker Canfield
Francis (Frank) Worster	E. Van Slyck

The Funding Act of 1877 was detrimental to public schools, as was the Readjuster Period of the 1880's when the former states of the Confederacy were in the throes of a readjustment of the public debt. The following resolution was adopted by the Fairfax County School Board on January 11, 1879, and subsequently rejected by the Virginia General Assembly:

Resolved that the General Assembly be requested to frame an amendment to the Constitution abolishing the present State School tax for free schools and requiring each County in the Commonwealth to levy and collect the State tax for the support of the free school. Such tax to be paid to the school boards and expended in County where collected.

On August 23, 1879 a motion was brought before the School Board recommending that the district school boards not open any public schools for the school year 1879-80. This was also defeated. An amended motion that the schools not be opened until January 1, 1880 likewise was defeated. This was perhaps the high point of opposition to the free public schools.

The state had withheld funds due the schools and when these funds were restored in 1879 by the Henkel Bill, teachers were paid from what became known as "arrearage Funds." In 1880 the law stated that teachers' salaries could only be paid "provided schoolhouses had been built and all expenses met" and as a result many teachers were not paid promptly.

The resolving of the state debt problem and funding was climaxed with the election of William Mahone to the United States Senate. Dr. Ruffner, State Superintendent of Schools, resigned in the midst of the political upheaval between the "Funders" and the "Readjusters." In 1882, Richard Radcliffe Farr, a resident of Fairfax Court House, became the second State Superintendent of Public Instruction. There was criticism of Mr. Farr because of his close political association with General Malone, which some maintained "cast a shadow over him."

One of the leading men of the Funders, Dr. J. L. M. Curry, wrote of Mr. Farr in 1885: "In my work as Peabody agent I found no superintendent more devoted to the cause of public schools, more energetic, more faithful, more efficient than Mr. Farr." Dr. Ruffner commented that there was a "vigor and a laudably progressive spirit" to Mr. Farr's administration of the public schools and "nothing revolutionary in the temper" as far as the schools were concerned.

Superintendent Farr soon called a Virginia Conference of County and City Superintendents of Public Free Schools for the purpose of "developing a professional spirit among public school men." Heretofore the county division superintendents were paid such small amounts that they often looked upon their office as an adjunct to another profession.

Professor M. D. Hall, for example, worked as a law clerk while serving Fairfax County as Division Superintendent. Farr served only until 1885 but in the two subsequent decades, 1886-1906, there were four State Superintendents, three of whom were not professional school men. Little change took place in the conditions of schools except that resulting from the natural increase in state population and resources. Teachers and administrators worked for improvements by forming such agencies as the Summer School of Methods, the State Teachers Association, the Virginia Journal of Education and the Cooperative Educational Association of Virginia.

Among the Acts of Assembly from 1875 to 1900 were 185 school laws, most of them of three types: those allowing a school district to sell unused property, to abolish a school district, or to change boundaries of a district.

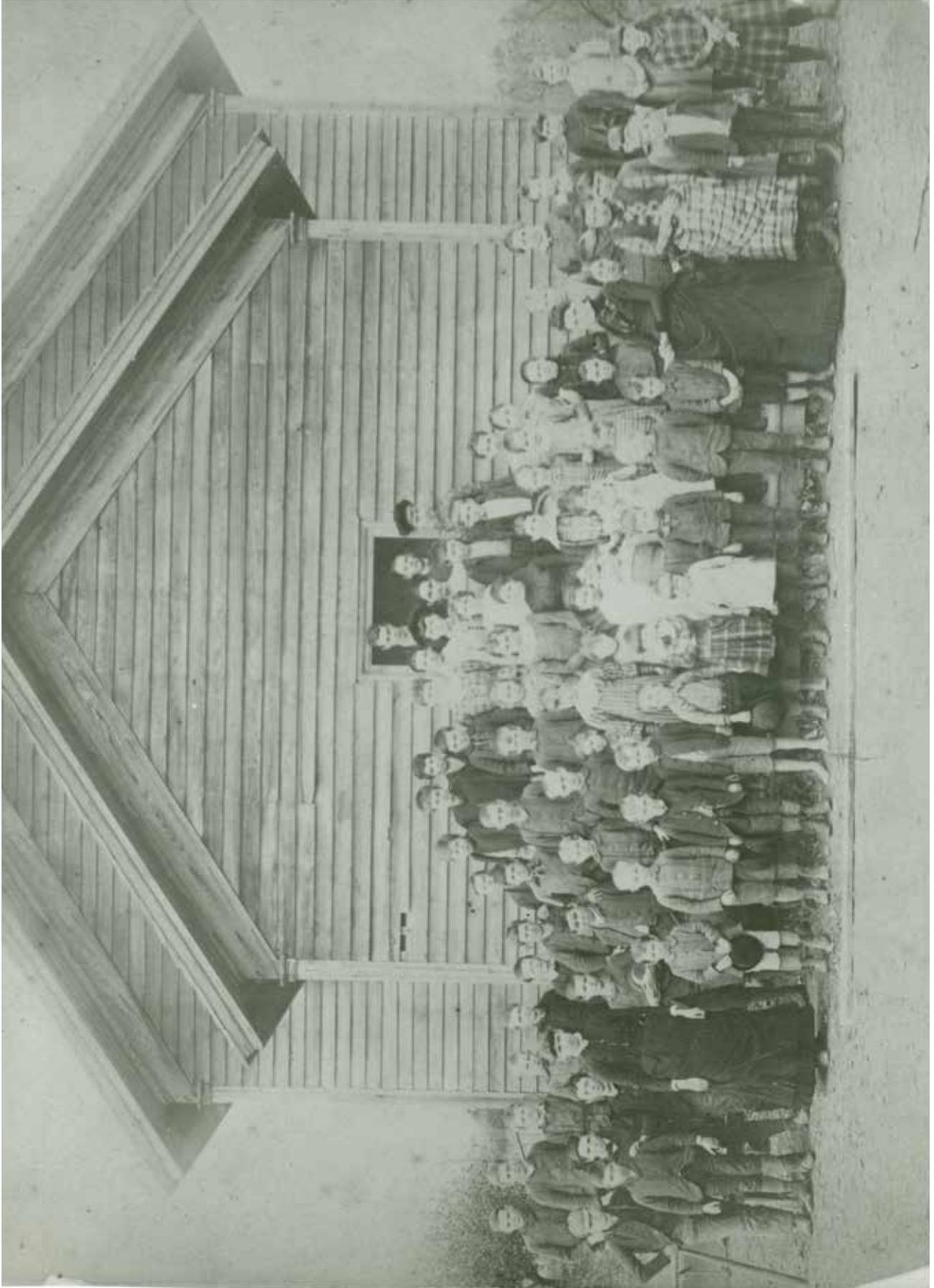
This was an uncertain period in Fairfax County. E. F. Crocker was appointed Division Superintendent on June 28, 1883 and qualified on July 2, 1883 but was rejected by the Senate on January 2, 1884. Mr. Crocker was reappointed February 16, 1884 but again rejected by the Senate on February 22, 1884. Then E. J. Northrup was appointed Division Superintendent on March 1, 1884 and confirmed on the same date - but failed to qualify. On November 21, 1884, J. M. Troth was appointed, but the Senate failed to act on the appointment. During this time Mr. Crocker continued as acting division superintendent, a post he held until Milton Dulany Hall was appointed and confirmed on February 26, 1886.

In his first report, Mr. Hall listed for the year ending 1886:

73 schools: 7 log, 3 brick, 0 stone (78 rooms in all)  
(3 built during year)  
64 without outhouses  
59 with suitable grounds  
50 with good furniture  
50 owned by the district  
value of property - \$29,500

He noted: "My predecessor [Crocker] reports value of school property to be \$79,800.00; This is clearly a mistake." Mr. Hall was successful in securing pay for his teachers, as noted in the Fairfax Herald on April 27, 1887:

Major Chichester is running for re-election as County Treasurer. The public school teachers have never been so promptly paid as within the past five months. Under an admirable arrangement by Superintendent Hall and Major Chichester regular pay days have been established and warrants cashed with the utmost possible regularity. VOTE FOR HIM ... Amount paid to teachers from County funds from August 1, 1886 to April 25, 1887, \$4,185.25 ... from Granstaff and Arrearage Fund, \$7,934.92 ... total paid to teachers since August 1, 1886, \$12,120.17.



Herndon School, built ca. 1875, now Breckenridge House on Center Street, photograph early twentieth century, courtesy Mrs. Edna Bicksler.

Mr. Hall commented in the Educational Journal of November 1890: "For the first time in the history of the public school system in this county the district boards this year made contracts with teachers for a term of six months."

From 1880-1900 summer institutes continued to grow and teachers' reading circles were organized. In 1891 the Virginia State Teachers Association was organized to help promote the cause of public education which continually struggled to overcome the stigma of "schools for the poor."

High schools were beginning to be developed and state reports in 1897 show 60 in operation in the state. Because of close proximity to excellent schools in Washington and Alexandria, Fairfax County provided few secondary schools, though between 1898 and 1905 many elementary neighborhood ones became graded schools.

In 1903 the Cooperative Education Association of Virginia was organized to make the people conscious of the "need for democracy in education." It conducted the May campaign of 1905 in the interest of informing all sections of the State about educational conditions and concerns. Through speeches in every part of the State and widespread distribution of educational literature, the awareness of the populace was awakened, and the May Campaign was effective in gaining support for free public schools.

The State Constitution of 1902 had given larger powers to the counties and made effective changes in funding legislation. The William Loan Fund Bill of 1908 provided for loans from the Literary Fund at 4 per cent to help build schoolhouses. This resulted in improved sanitary conditions, better buildings, and encouraged consolidation into graded schools. In the same era agriculture and home economics were added to the high school curriculum - subjects much needed in rural areas such as Fairfax County.

#### The Superintendency of Milton Dulaney Hall

The Alexandria Gazette on March 19, 1886, announced that M. D. Hall "qualified as Superintendent of Schools for Fairfax Co. on Monday last." Thus began a term of service which lasted for 43 years - 1886 to 1929. Milton Dulaney Hall, principal of the Jefferson School in Falls Church at the time of his appointment, had attended private schools and entered the University of Virginia to study law. He became a practicing attorney in Fairfax County in 1870, in partnership with Judge D. M. Chichester, the second superintendent of the Fairfax County Public Schools. Mr. Hall began his teaching career in 1873 in a one-room, log school at Centreville. He often walked the distance of seven miles from his residence near Burke to the school at Centreville, and back. He later taught at the Belle Aire School in Lee District before becoming principal of the Jefferson School.

At the time of his appointment there were 3,868 students enrolled in 86 schools and taught by 86 teachers. The Superintendent's salary was \$420 per year and the average teacher's salary was \$27 per month. In his first report he stated that although 444 students were studying "higher branches" the main criticism was that "they [the schools] fail to give a suitable preparation for the duties of life."

In 1887 the Superintendent reported that there were 79 schools, five of which were log, 71 frame and three brick. Only 73 had toilet facilities - all outhouses. Six schools were graded: Vienna, Falls Church, West End, Accotink, Lorton Valley and Herndon. The 86 teachers' salaries amounted to \$12,726.07; libraries, maps, globes, charts, blackboards, etc. cost \$33.51. Fuel, rent, lights, etc. cost the district boards \$1,976.84.

After 21 years in the office, Mr. Hall reported very little change. The school population had decreased to 3,667, though the number of school buildings had increased to 94 - three brick and 91 frame. No log buildings were still being used. All schools had "outhouses, suitable grounds and good furniture." Mr. Hall's salary had increased, as had the salaries paid teachers. White male teachers received the highest salary, \$40.77, and colored female teachers the lowest, \$26.29.

The next 22 years of Mr. Hall's administration brought both growth in the system and educational advances. Many of the one-room schools disappeared. Teachers' salaries rose to three and four digits. Separate rooms were established for libraries aided by the "State Aid" plan. The first high schools were organized and became accredited. The district school boards were abolished, and supervisors were added to aid Mr. Hall.

The report of Mr. Hall's last year as Superintendent (1928-29) gives the following data: the two supervisors were Edith Thompson and W. T. Woodson. The four-year accredited high schools were: Clifton, Floris, Franklin Sherman (McLean), Herndon, Jefferson (Falls Church), Lee-Jackson and Oakton. There were from 7 to 18 graduates in each.

The value of the school property had risen from \$32,500 in 1886 to \$707,000 in 1928. There were 65 school buildings. Of these, 29 were still one-room, 18 were two-room, and four were three-room schools. One school was built during the year. Fifty-two schools flew the American flag and six the Virginia flag. There were 509 students transported by 11 buses. All 65 schools were equipped with "patent desks." By May, 1929, it was known that Mr. Hall was to retire in July, but he seems to have reluctantly passed on the duties to his successor, W. T. Woodson. At the May meeting of the School Board he insisted that it was his duty to appoint the teachers for the ensuing term and presented the Board with his list.



W. T. Woodson, Superintendent of Fairfax County Schools, 1929 to 1961

At the end of the school year 1928-29, each school vied in its efforts to fete Mr. Hall. From April to June there was one testimonial dinner after another. The first was held on April 14 at Potters Hill School:

. . . a throng of his friends gathered . . . to tend him a reception and express the feelings of high regard the people of the county hold for him. As a mark of this regard, the people of the Potter's Hill section, through Col. E. H. Allen, of Newington, presented Mr. Hall with a handsome gold watch chain and a beautiful brooch to Mrs. Hall.

Madison School, in Falls Church, paid him a glowing tribute a month later. Among those honoring him were F. S. McCandlish, the Hon. R. Walton Moore, C. J. Heatwole, secretary of the VEA, and Lillian Millan of Legato School. The Negro teachers of the County held a reception at Baileys Cross Roads, presided over by Lillian Carey, principal of the Baileys School. After speeches by Mrs. M. E. Henderson of Falls Church and W. D. Gresham, state supervisor of Negro education, the teachers presented Mr. Hall with a silver tray, a smoking stand and several other gifts.

On July 1, 1929, after fifty-six years devoted to education in Fairfax County, M. D. Hall retired. With the end of his superintendency the era of the one-room school in Fairfax County also ended. Under W. T. Woodson, his successor, the era of consolidation began.

#### The Woodson Years

The years 1929-1961 were troubled years for public education. The decade of the thirties with the aftermath of the "Depression" meant money for schools was scarce. This was followed by World War II, with rationing and a teacher shortage. In the fifties, the post-war population shift had created a problem of insufficient classrooms and teachers as more and more people moved into Fairfax County.

It was during this period that W. T. Woodson, as Division Superintendent, transformed the County public schools from a scattering of 64 mostly rural, one-room buildings with a total student population of 4,742, into a complex, highly sophisticated urban system consisting of 93 school buildings housing 59,870 pupils.

The transition was far from easy. In the thirties, in addition to limited funds, there was a strong sentiment attached to the local one-room schools which had served the community so well and it took courage and foresight to effect needed change. Mr. Woodson had both, but he also was a skilled manager who was able to overcome the difficulties of financing school construction by obtaining funds for new schools by borrowing from the Literary Fund of Virginia and by arranging grants through the Works Projects Administration, neither of these channels necessitating a vote of the people.

The decade 1930-1940 is generally considered the era of "Consolidation of Schools." By 1940 many of the one and two-room schools were replaced with the construction of nine new consolidated elementary schools and two high schools, bringing the total down to 39 elementary and four high schools serving 6,899 pupils.

During the decade that followed, the State Department of Education along with local school boards placed emphasis upon improved instruction. In 1946 the State changed from the 7-4 plan of education to the 7-5 plan by adding the 8th grade area. Special education and the visiting teacher service were introduced in the County on a small scale. Other innovations were introduced including in-service workshops, and increased emphasis was placed on the vocational, educational and personal aspects of guidance.

The wartime demands on building materials impeded construction and only four new elementary and one high school were built during this period, setting the stage for the problems of the fifties which by now were becoming evident. Pupil membership had grown by 8,408 since 1941 and the County was facing a classroom shortage.

The fifties in Fairfax County education were characterized by more children, classroom shortages, bond referendums, school construction and enriched school curriculum with many new special services in the educational program. Entering the decade with 17,680 pupils, the student membership was to swell to 59,870 by 1961.

The size of the population growth reflected a similar pattern in the expansion of facilities in the system. In 1951 there were 42 school buildings and a bus fleet of 83 buses. At the end of the period there were 93 school buildings and 253 buses were required to deliver students to their schools.

In 1957 representatives of various county organizations in cooperation with the school board and staff made a study of school organization. A decision was reached to reorganize the school system from a 7-5 grade division to a 6-2-4 arrangement. This plan became effective in 1960-61 with the opening of nine new 1,000 capacity intermediate schools for grades 7 and 8. This program provided an enriched curriculum through modified departmentalization with special facilities and teachers trained in the assigned subjects. Even as the race to the moon was beginning with the launching of Sputnik, special efforts to improve the quality in curriculum to better cope with the future were already well under way in the Fairfax County Public School system.

W. T. Woodson, in his 32 years at the helm, guided the County public schools through revolutionary changes in the size, curriculum, administration and school operation in bridging the gap between the little back country school and an outstanding academic institution, ranked among the nation's top twenty in size, which could boast 65 per cent of the graduates of the class 1961 going on to college as compared to the national average of 43 per cent.

It is interesting to note that from 1886-1961 Fairfax County had only two division superintendents - M. D. Hall 43 years and W. T. Woodson for 32 years.

### The Expansion Years

As the Fairfax County Public Schools moved into the 1960's under the Superintendency of Earl C. Funderburk they faced a period of unprecedented growth and progress.

School enrollment in the County had grown from 53,823 housed in 85 schools in the 1959-60 school year to a total of 130,157 students attending 158 schools during 1969-70. The total school budget increased during the same period from \$61.3 million to \$111.4 million.

The expansion and growth of the County school system was accompanied by developing and initiating new curriculum patterns plus use of more relevant teaching-planning methods and equipment.

In the curriculum area, programs for physically and mentally handicapped students were expanded. Other emerging patterns included kindergartens for all five-year-olds; Head Start for four-year-olds; and science, music and physical education taught by specialists in elementary school.

Vocational education was greatly expanded during the decade in the belief that every student should have the opportunity to attain occupational competence compatible with his or her abilities and interests. To advise and assist the student in determining and achieving desired goals, guidance counselors were added in all intermediate and high schools.

Adult education programs also were expanded in recognition that responsibility for education in the County extends beyond the traditional secondary education level. Similarly, summer school programs were expanded to offer additional courses and moved away from the concept that summer school was intended solely to offer the student an opportunity to make up deficiencies.

New approaches in teaching methods at the elementary school level during the 1960's included introduction of the ungraded primary and the practice of cooperative or team teaching. In secondary schools a wide variety of team-taught interdisciplinary courses, independent study, school-within-a-school and family unit-of instruction programs were instituted. Innovations such as these were reflected in the construction of new schools which were planned to better fit new teaching methods and equipment.

New teaching equipment and materials were introduced and widely used by the end of the decade. These included overhead, filmstrip and movie projectors, tape recorders, and television which were in wide use at all

levels by the 1969-70 school year. An Instructional Media Center was established to service this equipment and provide materials such as films and slides for their use. All school libraries in the County were expanded to meet the standards established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Also, libraries became educational media centers to encourage individual and small group study.

Another interesting direction during the decade was the adoption of the intermediate school program for grades 7 and 8 which had started with the opening of the first seven intermediate schools constructed in the County in the fall of 1960. At the end of the decade there were 17 intermediate schools and one combination high-intermediate school in operation. Construction was also underway on one new intermediate and another high-intermediate combination school.

A major program development involving more than 8,000 children was the establishment in 1968 of kindergartens in every County elementary school. These have grown to an enrollment of 8,613 for 1969-70.

During the decade all County elementary schools joined the Southern Association of College and Schools, and all were accredited by the Association. All secondary schools were accredited by the State Board of Education, which had just moved into the area of accreditation of elementary schools.

The integration of Fairfax County schools was completed during the early 1960's. The County was in the first group of schools in the United States to be certified by the U. S. Commissioner of Education as having complied with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Because of the growth of County schools, four decentralized areas were established in the interest of bringing the instructional programs closer to the school communities they serve. Supervisory and media personnel were assigned to these offices starting in December 1967, under the leadership of an Area Administrator to further develop promising programs at the local level.

No discussion of Fairfax County Public Schools during the 1960's would be complete without a look at personnel. During the 1959-60 school year there was a total of 3,098 instructional and support personnel employed by the County schools. By 1969-70 the number approximated 10,000. During the same period the annual starting salary for teachers increased from \$4,200 to \$7,000. In December 1969, the County School Board became the first in the metropolitan area to reach agreement with its teaching personnel for the 1970-71 school year.

As they entered the 1970's, the Fairfax County Schools had a new division superintendent, Lawrence M. Watts, who attacked the many problems facing one of the largest and fastest growing school systems in the United States.

Meeting school construction requirements became difficult. Increasing interest rates and a tight money market necessitated deferral of all but top priority construction. Dr. Watts focused attention on improvement in the quality of instruction with emphasis on staff development and on providing more and better instructional materials and equipment.

### Epilogue

After the untimely death of Dr. Watts on June 15, 1970, S. Barry Morris served as acting superintendent until Dr. S. John Davis was appointed Division Superintendent in September 1970. Following the lead of his predecessors, he continued to strive for quality education in the Fairfax County Public Schools. Early in his term in office he promulgated Commitment to Education, an outline of the school administration's plans to accept the responsibility for the development of each child into an adult who can stand confidently, participate fully, learn continually, and contribute meaningfully in his world.

In the words of Dr. Davis,

The course of education in the seventies has not been set. The pressures of social change have sharpened the conflict of philosophies ranging from rigid traditionalism to radical liberalism. More than ever Fairfax County needs a school system responsive both to the needs of the community and to the human potential of each child. Now the nation's 15th largest public school system, the Fairfax County Public Schools require a management system that focuses all its efforts and all its resources on what happens to the child in the classroom. Neither technology nor streamlined computer systems, nor proliferated paper work must be permitted to detract from the warmth and humaneness of teaching.

### III.

#### HISTORY OF THE LEGATO SCHOOL

By Virginia B. Peters

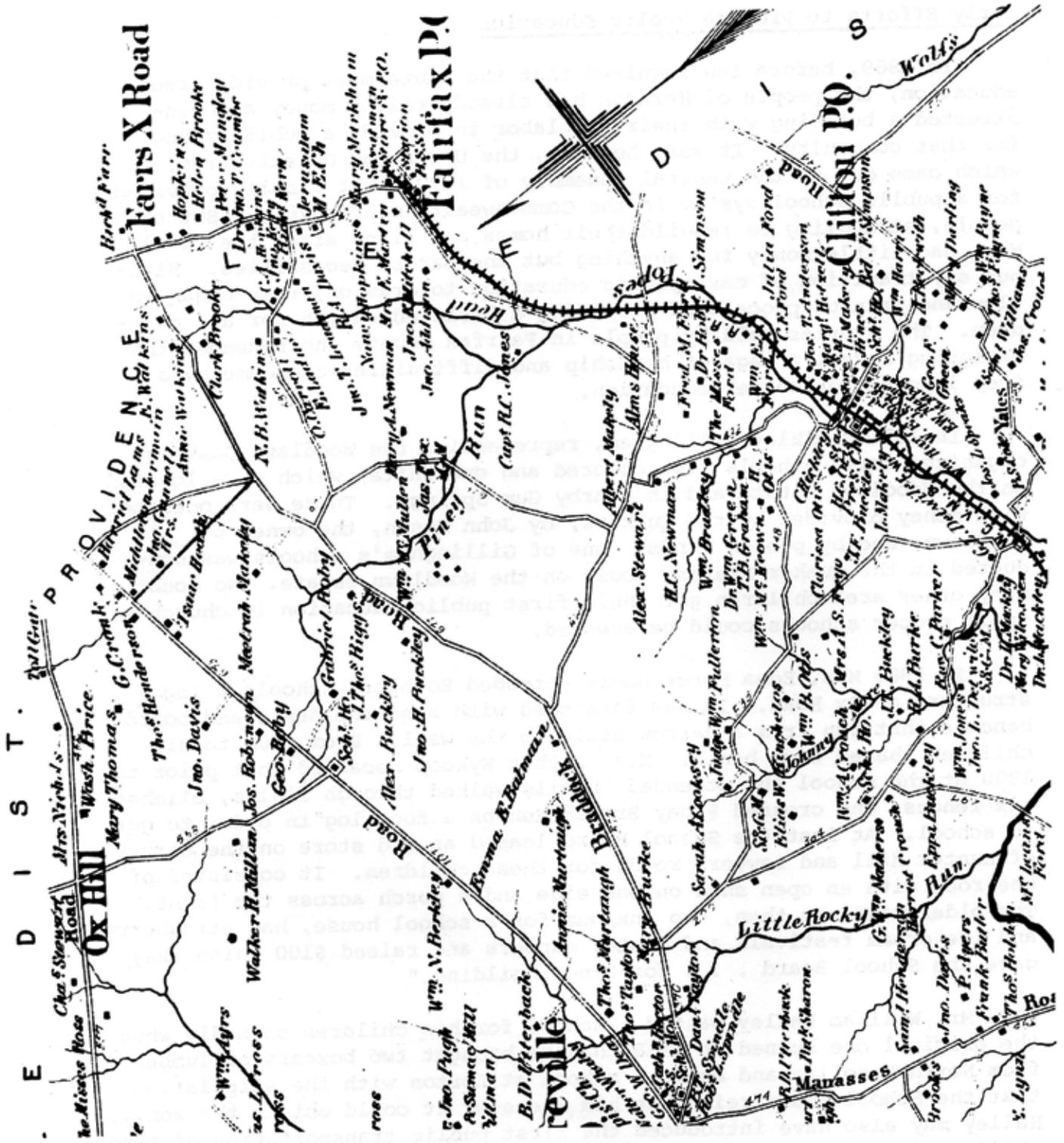
##### Early Efforts to Provide Public Education

In 1869, before law required that the State must provide free education, the people of Herndon had already raised money and constructed a building with their own labor to provide a public school for that community. It was, however, the Underwood Constitution, which came out of the General Assembly of 1870, that finally provided for a public school system in the Commonwealth of Virginia. But the people, struggling to rebuild their homes and lives after the Civil War, had little money for anything but the barest necessities. Without any tradition of mass public education to draw on, they began the slow and painful process of providing a basic education for all children. The stories told by people in Fairfax County who remember the beginning reveal a stage of hardship and difficulties overcome by a deep longing for better education.

In 1871 Chalkley Gillingham, representing the Woodlawn Quakers, organized three schools (two colored and one white) which were located on the Woodlawn estate and in nearby Gum Springs. These were operated with money provided by the Quakers, by John Mason, the owner of Woodlawn, and by public funds. One of Gillingham's schools was conducted in the Quaker Meeting House on the Woodlawn estate. No doubt many other area children got their first public education in churches until proper schools could be erected.

In 1883 Mrs. Edna Force Davis attended Rochford School, a log structure on Ox Road. It was furnished with handmade desks and board benches that ran from a narrow aisle to the wall. From four to six children shared each bench. Mrs. Arthur Wykoop recalled that prior to 1890 at the School she attended "pupils walked through fields, climbed six fences, and crossed Piney Branch Run on a foot log" in order to get to school. At last the School Board leased an old store on the corner of Hunter Mill and Lawyers roads for these children. It consisted of one room with an open shed on one side and a porch across the front. The older students then, "so anxious for a school house, had strawberry and ice cream festivals and oyster suppers and raised \$100 which they gave the School Board . . . for a new building.

Mr. William Halley wanted a school for his children so badly when the original one burned in 1918 that he brought two boxcars of lumber from North Carolina and built a school at Lorton with the stipulation that the School Board reimburse him whenever it could obtain the money. Halley may also have introduced the first public transportation of school children in Fairfax County. For a year he drove eight children to and from school in his 1922 Chevrolet so that they would not have to walk through the grounds of the Lorton Correctional Institution. The next



Portion of Centreville District No. 1 Map, Hopkins 1878 Atlas, showing location of Legato School

year the School Board put out bids for the job, someone else got the contract and the first bus system had come into being. What the inhabitants of Virginia lacked in material wealth in those days they made up for with determination and ingenuity.

### The Origins of the Legato School

The Virginia School Report by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1874 lists 48 one-room schools in Fairfax County. They included one brick building, 30 frame, and 17 log. Of the total number in operation, only 40 had "suitable grounds," 30 provided no sanitary facilities, 15 needed better furniture, and six had no blackboards. In the whole County school system there were only three globes and seven wall maps! By the 1877-78 term, there were 65 schools in operation, 48 for white and 17 for colored children. That year women teachers drew an average salary of \$29.66 a month as they presided over 31 of the County schools; male teachers manned the other 36 and earned a monthly stipend of \$32.73. The school term averaged less than five months.

That was also the term during which H. M. Fairfax, under the direction of John F. Rigg and John T. DeBell, trustees of the Centreville School District, surveyed two lots of land for the purpose of selecting one on which to erect a school. Both lots were part of a tract lying south of Warrenton Pike (now Lee Highway) belonging to William Ayre. The site chosen contained "two acres, no rods and 37 poles" of land; the following September commissioners, appointed by the court, met on the property and decided that \$36.82 was "a just compensation" for it. Thus in November 1877 the report of the commissioners was accepted, the deed recorded, and the money paid to Mr. Ayre. On that parcel of land where Pender and Legato roads merge into Lee Highway, a small, white, one-room school was built which was destined to serve the educational needs of its community for more than half a century.

Known temporarily as Number 5, it was eventually christened the Legato School. Some suggest the school was named after a place called Legato where the Sisson brothers and their father ran a distillery. Mary Elizabeth Balderson says her mother recalled that at one time an itinerant who was either a musician or a piano tuner suggested that the school be named after the musical term, legato, to signify "a smooth, even passage." If that is so, the road and the site of the distillery were named after the school.

In the main, the fortunes of those who conducted and those who attended the school appear to have been placid enough, but there were a few small storms in the passage that may be briefly mentioned before going on to the accomplishments achieved there. Throughout 1912 and 1913 the records show that the trustees and teachers of the school had problems with a group of Dunkards who wished to use the building for a Sunday School. In 1912 one B. F. A. Myers was forbidden to enter the school and the trustee, W. W. Swart, was appointed a committee of one

to "fix secure fasteners on the windows and the door." These measures apparently did not deter the Dunkards because the School Board minutes for one meeting in 1913 reveal that the group had been informed once more that since there was a church for such purposes, the Legato School was not available. In 1915 the Brethren Church asked to hold Sunday School in the building and "after due consideration and a great deal of controversy, it was decided not to grant the request."

The next rough passage which appears in the surviving records occurred in 1920. On February 18 of that year, the Board met, and after listening to a statement by Trustee W. W. Swart, decided to close the school for the term. Two days later the Board reconvened. The minutes of the meeting state "it was agreed to reconsider our action and give [the teacher] a chance to be heard." She told her story and Mr. Swart repeated his. Then the other members of the Board, Mr. Garret and Mr. Spindel, retired to discuss the matter and came to the conclusion that the school had not been properly run, but that if the teacher would promise to "run the school according to the rules for conducting a one-room school," she would be allowed to complete the six-month term. The Board asked Mr. Hall, Fairfax County Superintendent of Schools, to observe her in order to make sure that she measured up to their standards. What that teacher's shortcomings were or how she failed to meet the requirements is not disclosed. The only other adversity was recorded in a terse statement in the School Board records for 1916 which said that "Elgin, Rock Hill, and Legato were passed by until a suitable teacher could be found for those schools." Since Legato was not mentioned again in 1916, we must assume the children did not go to school there that year.

#### Closing of the Legato School

After years of peaceful contributions to community education, the little school ended its years of service in a blaze of controversy between parents who wanted to keep their neighborhood school and County officials who had decided that consolidation was the only answer to the growing population and the need for a wider scope of learning to train the young people for the increasingly complex world they would face as adults. In 1928, a group of parents went before the Board to protest a decision to bus the students to Centreville and to ask for another teacher to help deal with the growing enrollment. That year they were partially successful because the order to transport some of the older children to Centreville was rescinded, but the second teacher was denied and a temporary partition which had been erected to accommodate the additional teacher had to be removed.

The school remained one-room to the end. There were over 40 children in the school that year. So in 1929 the Board moved that "Because of overcrowding . . . the fifth, sixth and seventh grades at Legato be transported to the Centreville school." Reluctantly the parents agreed. The following year, the School Board records for June 5, 1930 report, "Mr. Murphy moved that Legato be consolidated with Centreville at the latter place. Motion seconded and carried." Those simple words brought to an end the long and distinguished service of a one-room country school.

During the next two decades the small, frame, one-room schools would be replaced throughout rural America by large, brick, consolidated schools as the population grew and settlement patterns changed. But 50 years ago small rural churches and one-room schools dotted the countryside. They stood in lovely wooded areas, raising their spires or belfries to unpolluted skies. They often followed the same pattern – a simple, rectangular, white frame building with a brick chimney and, usually, a spire or belfry outlined against treetops. A plank porch led to plain but dignified double doors with a green shuttered window on either side. Each side wall was broken by three windows. The tin roof, often painted the same color as the shutters, and slanting from its peak down over the walls, gave an air of satisfying symmetry to the whole. Today we look at those which still stand and a nostalgia for the less complicated times they represented stirs deep within us. But as everything else was changing, education had to change too, and the little schools were left to languish and decay in the backwaters, or to be torn down if they stood in the way of progress. Some were converted into residences, stores or farm buildings. They could not provide the diversity of courses, the scientific equipment, and the specialized teachers that the industrialized world around them demanded. They had served the rural population well and had earned a right to be retired with honor.

#### A Day in the Life of Students at Legato School in the 1920's

The children who went to the Legato School walked down the dusty Warrenton Pike and turned into a wooded lot. There was no playground equipment, but in the later years there was a sturdy post to hold the large bell which the teacher rang to call the students to their classes. They mounted the low wooden porch, went through the double doors and stepped into a narrow hall which ran the width of the building. The cloak room, from its wide board floors to the wainscoting which reached three feet up the wall, to the board studded with hooks which ran around the area, to its high ceiling, was typical of the cloak rooms of the period. Perhaps the dark beige paint on the walls which the students remember was also standard. Here the boys hung their coats and caps on the right side and the girls put theirs on the left. On cold or rainy days, mittens and galoshes dried there, too, along with a stack of fire wood. On the shelf in this hall stood the water cooler with cups and a basin with towels for washing hands.

From the cloak room the children entered the main room through a narrow door. The walls and wainscoting in the larger room were a lighter beige. The boys moved to sit in the double desks on the right and the girls took their places on the left of the room. A long rectangular, cast-iron stove stood in the center of the room, "not too far from the door." Around this and down the aisle marched the students as they went to recite their lessons. Those reciting sat on a long bench facing the teacher's desk, holding their slates or tablets and their books in their laps until the teacher had "heard" their lesson.

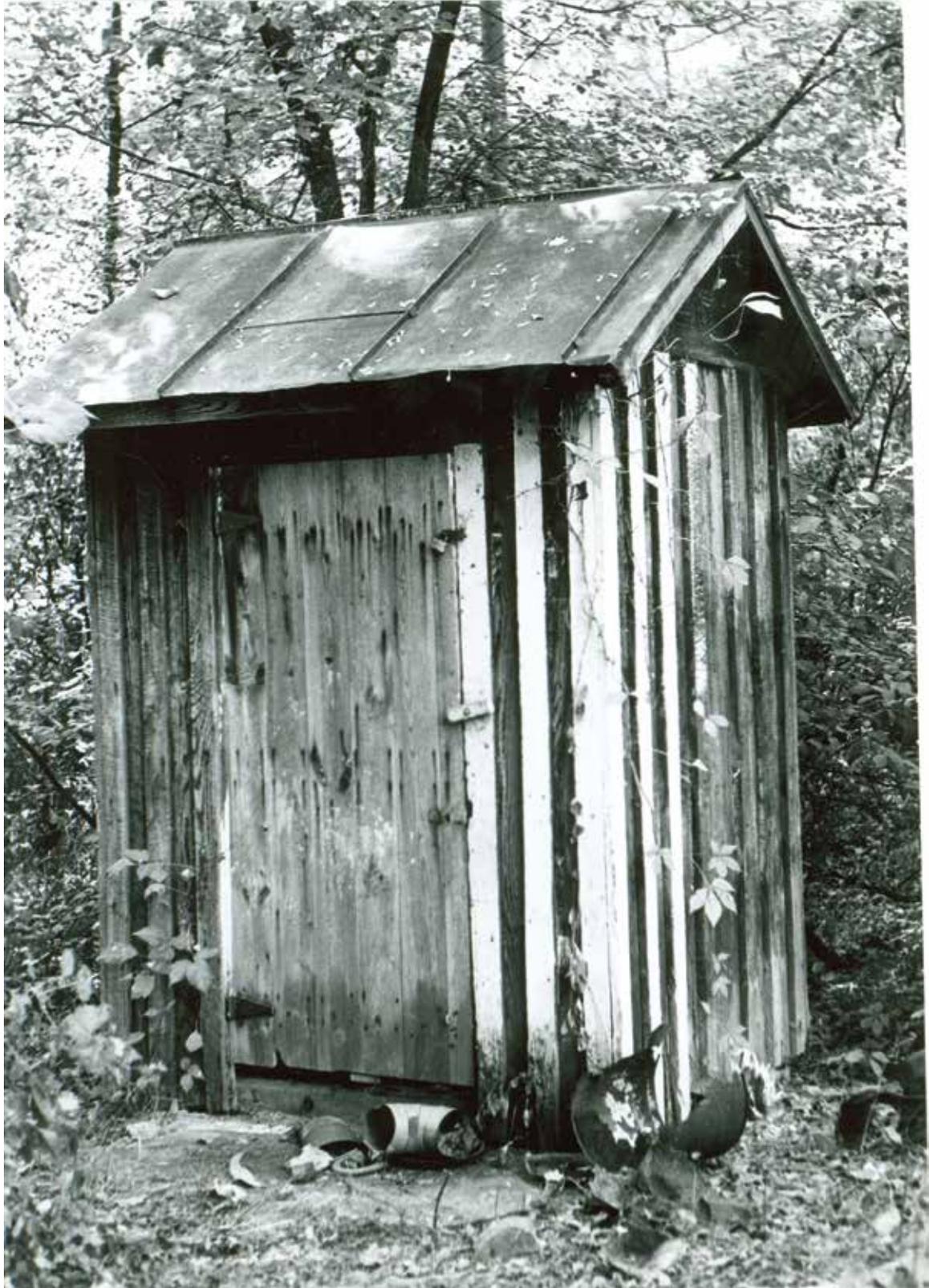
The teacher's desk was on a low, wooden platform against the back wall. Behind her were some shelves on which she kept a dictionary and

other books. There was a large blackboard on the back wall to the right of the teacher's desk. A large bookcase stood to the right of her desk also. It was "perfectly plain" of light or "reddish" wood, with doors of solid wood. In it the teacher kept chalk, erasers, papers and, no doubt, the library which Legato had secured from the State by raising money to match public funds. At the front there was a flag and "a nice, big picture of George Washington." On the left were two maps - one of "the hemisphere" and one of the United States - which the teacher turned to the wall on test days.

The day began at nine o'clock in the morning and ended at three in the afternoon. The lunch break lasted an hour. Earl Brown recalled that the students had no equipment for entertaining themselves at recess. They played tag and other games of their own devising. Usually the boys and girls separated on the playground; although once in awhile, he said, "The older boys and girls would stand around together and giggle some." He was in second grade and too young to be included in this diversion.

Brown stated that children brought their lunches in buckets or paper bags. He carried his in the latter and one bag was expected to last the week. Mrs. Balderson, who lived across the road and went home for lunch, could remember no details of the procedure for eating, but Mrs. Alvin Sherwood said she thought there was a table at the back to hold the lunch buckets and bags. She couldn't remember a specific routine for washing hands in the basin before lunch but said that such facilities were available in the cloak room. None of the students could remember much about what they had for lunch, but a group of men and women who attended Silver Hill School at Lorton told Kathryn Hogan that they carried their lunches from home in Karo syrup pails (one large family used a gallon bucket). They took sandwiches generally made with biscuits or homemade bread, with any filling they had at home. A hunk of cornbread and fish was one boy's choice, while fried sweet potato sandwiches were another's favorite.

The water bucket with a dipper was a part of every one-room school since few had a well on the grounds; bigger boys carried the water from a nearby spring or a neighbor's pump. Going after water or wood was a favorite chore for the bigger boys provided they could do it during class time! Sarah Cox, who taught in the area from 1896 to 1935, wrote, "We all drank from the same cup, if we drank at all, and I think there must have been no germs then, for I don't remember any deaths!" Mrs. Edna Davis reported that all the children drank from a long-handled dipper and then dropped it back into the bucket. Lillian Millan recalled how she finally succeeded in having each child bring his drinking cup instead of using the common dipper. Ruby Payne Collins, who taught at Legato during the 1911-12 term, remembered a water cooler which was then placed near the teacher's desk and she thought they used paper cups. Mrs. Balderson, who attended the school from 1916 to 1922 said that they made their own disposable paper cups.



Boys' outhouse, Legato School on original site, 1970, photograph by  
Andy Wolfe

Other sanitary facilities consisted of two outhouses. An item in the School Board records for November 1912 orders W. W. Swart to have two outhouses built at the Legato School and to send the bill to the clerk, Mr. J. D. Garret. It does not seem possible that the school could have operated since 1877 without these "necessaries." So perhaps the new ones were built because the old ones were worn out or because they did not meet the standards of the day. One fine example still standing on the grounds from which the school was removed was probably that used by the boys when the school closed in 1930. The students who went there state that the girls' facility was directly behind the school while the boys' stood behind and to the right.

Although many one-room schools of the day had a small, lean-to shed attached to the rear of the main building for storing stove wood, Legato seems not to have had one, and Mrs. Balderson recalled the stack of drying wood in the cloak room.

Neither Mrs. Collins nor any of the students who attended Legato could recall exactly what texts they used, but both Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Wynkoop named identical lists of books. These included McGuffey's readers, Watson's spellers, Swinton's grammar, Davis and Peck arithmetic, Appleton's geography, and Mrs. Davis added an "Eclectic History." It is probable that the same texts were used in most schools of the County and that would include Legato. The latter was fortunate, though, to possess a rare collection known as "the library."

Lillian Millan relates how the school came to have such an unusual enrichment facility:

After leaving Navy I taught in several other one-room schools - Chantilly, Pender, Legato and Jermantown. The sanitary conditions and equipment were just about the same, outdoor toilets, small blackboards, poor desks, etc., with nothing in the way of a library except at Legato where we acquired [one] by raising money to supplement the gift from the State.

#### The Cost of Public Education at Legato

During the past 100 years of public education, nothing has changed more than the cost of it. In 1871 the school population of Fairfax County was 4,256, and \$1,063.50 was appropriated to support the school system. It took \$126,591,049 to maintain the system for the school year 1970-71. Although the school population had risen to 132,513 pupils, a little simple arithmetic will show the astronomical rise in the cost per pupil in providing education for the County's young people.

In 1971, Greenbriar West Elementary School was completed at a cost of \$1,195,000. How much did it cost to build an elementary school in 1871? There is no record on the building of the Legato School. The date of its origin is inferred from the record of the land purchase in 1877 and the presence of the school on a map in the Hopkins Atlas of 1879.

Hence we do not know what the cost of erecting it was; however, several references to the sale or purchase of such schools in Virginia give the value of such buildings as about \$400. The furnishings usually included enough desks to accommodate 30 to 35 children, a table or desk for the teacher, some shelves or a bookcase, a cast-iron wood-burning stove, a water bucket and dipper, a basin for washing and perhaps a flag. The School Board furnished firewood, but students and teacher provided other necessary supplies.

The cost of maintenance was equally low. We do not have records for Legato before 1906, but those School Board minutes we have make no reference to money spent on Legato until a bill for \$100 was paid to James Harris in 1910 "to repair the school." No sum was entered for the cost of the outhouses built in 1912 so perhaps every expenditure did not find its way into the record. In 1921 the County spent \$35 on furniture for Clifton, Legato and Centreville. In 1923 Mary Millan was reimbursed \$4.39 for a blackboard and "\$2.60 for other supplies." There is a record of another \$9.50 being spent on the school that year. If the records are complete Legato School received no special attention in 1924, but the following year was a time for major refurbishing. The extra double desks installed were secondhand; we don't know if the stove was new, but the record states that M. S. Kielsgard earned \$3 for hauling it there and W. W. Cross installed a bell. New shades were put up at the windows and with labor and materials for unspecified repairs, a total of nearly \$50 was allotted to the school in 1925.

#### The Learning Process

Although the school system has grown increasingly complex and costly, it is doubtful if the process of learning has really changed as much as everything else. Then, as now, what happened in the school room depended largely on the teacher. In those days, the criterion for qualification was not a degree, for few people had one. Instead, one aspiring to teach was tested. Minnie B. Hughes, who taught for 36 years in the County, recalled,

It is amazing even now recalling the State's Qualifying Examination for Teaching. According to your score you received a first, second, or third certificate. Your salary was based upon the type of certificate, the first grade being the highest.

In Fairfax County during most of the Legato era, M. D. Hall administered the tests. Nearly every teacher recalling those days refers to the ordeal of taking the test and waiting for the results. The records of one fine teacher in the County show that she scored in the high nineties when she first took the test, but rated only 81 per cent after ten years of teaching! Regardless of the test scores, the history of Fairfax County education shows a constant striving by teachers as well as by Superintendents Hall and Woodson and their successors to improve professional competence.



Miss Lillian Millan, teacher at Legato School,  
print Fairfax County Public Schools



Miss Mary Millan and Class, front porch of Legato School, ca. 1920, courtesy of Mrs. Alvin Sherwood.

Pedagogical methods varied, but making learning fun was then, as it is now, the teacher's secret weapon. A group reminiscing about the Silver Hill School at Lorton remembered Molly Goodwin,

. . . a great mathematics teacher [who] would stand up in front of the class with a yardstick and direct the recitations much as an orchestra leader while [the students] sounded out their multiplication tables.

Another teacher, June Thompson, liked spelling bees and so, doubtless, did the children under her. One teacher had the students put the names of the states and their capitals into a song which they sang until they knew them all by heart.

With 30 to 40 students ranging in age from five or six to 20 years of age, a teacher's ingenuity must have been strained to the limit to keep everyone gainfully employed at all times. One of the methods that appeared as a great innovation in public schools a few years ago was the ungraded primary, designed to release the small child from the strict confinement of one grade and allow him freedom to proceed at his own pace in each subject. For example, he might move slowly in reading, but quickly in mathematics, and in the ungraded system his difficulties in one area need not hamper him in others. This "new" system was apparently universal in the one-room school, at least in the early decades. Thus each child could go through his readers, spellers, and arithmetic books as quickly as his talents and enthusiasm allowed.

Students who attended one-room schools often refer affectionately to the stern discipline that prevailed in those days; invariably the teacher was respected both for her own air of authority and, as one student remembers, because he feared the "licking" his father would give him at home much more than anything the teacher could administer. Apparently in those days one followed the other as surely as night the day! Another reason for lack of discipline problems in those days was put forward by Willie Halley, who said that he "took care of the horses and fed the pigs" before going to school in those days. Not only was the air of authority strong both at home and in the school, but there was little free time for planning mischief.

The Misses Mary and Lillian Millan were highly respected for their strict discipline. Mrs. Balderson relates that one day she unconsciously tapped her pencil on her desk while she was studying. Not only did Miss Millan reprove Mary Elizabeth on the spot, but she took her home that afternoon and reported to the little girl's mother that the child was "flippin' her garters." Humiliated and frightened, Mary Elizabeth never tapped her pencil again, but she apparently admired Miss Millan greatly and helped her sweep the floor every afternoon. For this task she received the princely sum of 50¢ per month. She recalled that Miss Millan walked to school and never missed because of bad weather. She remembered that the teacher carefully closed the shutters on the windows every afternoon and did many other janitorial chores in addition to her teaching.

But although discipline was stern, enterprising students did manage a few pranks. One teacher kept her clock on her desk, but during the winter months she would often go down into the room in order to sit by the stove as much as possible on cold days. While she was working with a class, some big boy would sidle to her desk and set the clock ahead. Then all the children could go home early.

Lillian Millan used an automobile to go to school during her last years at Legato and Earl Brown recounted how one day the big boys put her car on wood blocks and waited in the woods until she came out to drive home. At first the car wouldn't move, but when it finally got loose from the blocks "it took off like a jackrabbit with Miss Millan in it." Mr. Brown said the punishment was quick and effective, but the boys felt the pain was worth the fun their prank had given them.

Each year Mr. Hall, the Superintendent, visited every school in the County. Although he is remembered as a fine old man who took a kindly interest in each school, his arrival for a visit took on the aspect of a military inspection. Desks were cleaned and the whole room made neat, teacher and children took special pains with their appearance, and everyone participated to make the lessons the Superintendent observed as fine as possible. Mr. Halley related, "When Mr. Hall came around in his horse and buggy, we would perform although we were scared to death."

But there were lighter moments. Herbert Allen reported that at Potters Hill School, Miss Leila Milstead provided such festive occasions as pie parties, Easter egg hunts and taffy pulls. The taffy was made in a large pot on the school stove.

Minnie B. Hughes gives a vivid picture of her teaching days:

When thinking back over my teaching career, I have innumerable memories. Until the thirties, I drove a horse and buggy to school. For years I started the fire . . . On Fridays the older children helped with the cleaning. At the time of my retirement my salary was \$65 . . . I remember also the great preparations and the activities of the Field Days [athletic competitions], the last day of school, spelling bees, the league meetings, the County teachers' meetings, the continual lengthening of the school term, sending someone for water, my girls being more studious than my boys.

Mrs. Hughes' picture of the simple facilities, the hard physical work, the sense of community as all participated in athletic and intellectual activities together, the constant striving to improve both the quantity and quality of the learning, reflects the general aura of the education process that went on in the one-room county schools of the past century.

Although she was 100 years old when interviewed, Mrs. Hughes was not living in the past. She told us,

I have also delighted, especially during and since the fifties, in the rapid improvement of the school system in providing quality education for every child. During my career I often thought of the lines,

I shot an arrow into the air;  
It fell to earth I know not where . . .

for a teacher daily shoots the arrow of knowledge and hopes it will find its mark in the hearts and minds of the students. Frequently the evidence of its having found its mark is not apparent for years.

The effect of the work of such teachers as Mrs. Hughes and the Millan sisters can never be measured, but the restored Legato School and the report accompanying that restoration will be a memorial to them and their coworkers and to the buildings in which they labored.

## SCHOOL-HOUSES AND COTTAGES.

21

It is better, therefore, in rural districts to calculate on giving fewer pupils to a teacher. Twenty-five are sufficient to employ all the time and energies of a first-rate instructor. Could parents make up their minds to meet the extra expense they would be better satisfied with the result. The law of compensation holds true in regard to teachers as in the market place: We must give value to get value in return.

36. It may be remarked, in passing, that when the school increases beyond the number which the teacher can attend to, the teacher's room may be used as a class-room by an assistant or one of the advanced pupils in hearing the recitations of the beginners. All the plans contemplate this as a probable necessity, and have been arranged accordingly.

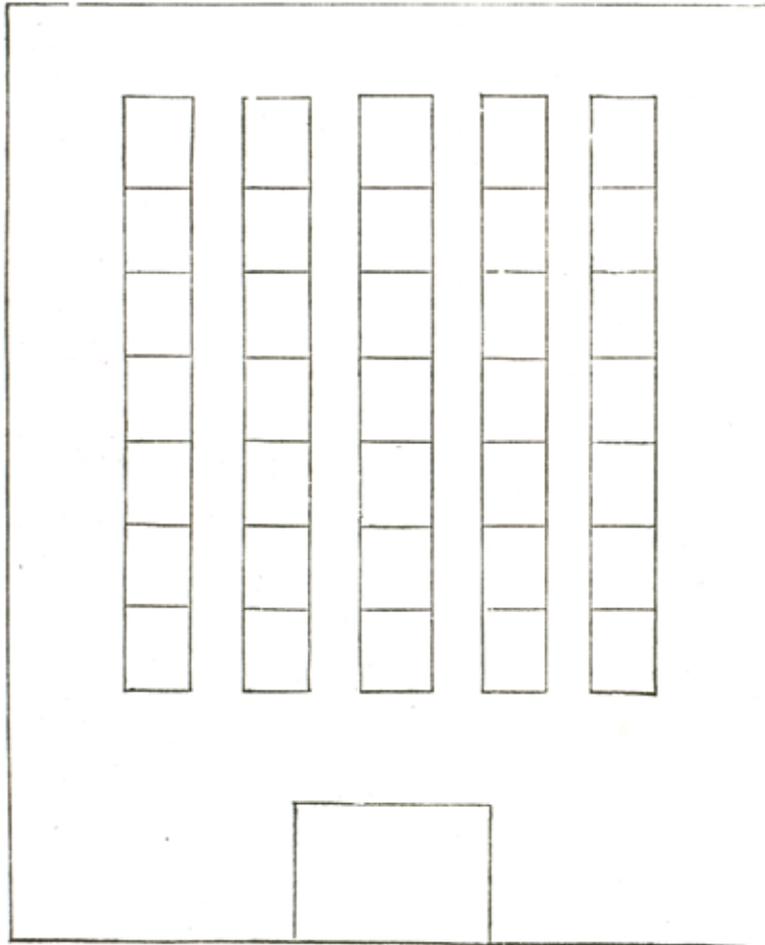


Fig. 2. School-room for thirty-five pupils at single desks.

Let us divide them into five rows of seven in a row. Set them a foot and a half apart to give passage ways. This forms a parallelogram-shaped block sixteen feet across in front and seventeen and a half deep. Add an aisle three and a half feet to each side, the total width is sixteen feet. An aisle of three feet in rear, another of three feet in front next the platform, with the width of the platform, five feet, added, will give a total length of twenty-eight and a half feet. The teacher and each pupil has an average space on the floor of nearly twenty feet. This is a very suitable form for a school-room.

The divisions in the rows represent the spaces occupied by the desks and seats. Single desk 2 feet in front by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in the row; inside aisles  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot; side aisles  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet; end aisles 3 feet Teacher's platform, 5 x 6 feet. Size of room,  $28\frac{1}{2}$  x 23 feet.

37. Suppose the school officers on counting up find that they need to provide a house for thirty-five or forty pupils. Only a small building is required. Let us lay two plans: one, for seating each of the pupils at a desk alone; the other, two at a desk. The thirty-five pupils, if seated separately, would of course require thirty-five desks. They are to be arranged in convenient form for the observation and instruction of the teacher, as well as for their own comfort.

#### IV.

#### THE ARCHITECTURE OF ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

By Tony P. Wrenn

Whether on the early southern plantation in a structure erected for the education of the planter's children, or in the pioneer town with a penchant for educating its youth, the school building constructed in any era prior to the twentieth century was likely to be one-room, one-story, and amazingly like its counterparts. The variation from region to region of the country was slight and the school house was instantly recognized. It was only in larger communities, where more than 60 students must be taught, or in the era following the introduction of graded schools – late in the nineteenth century in Virginia – that the plan was modified. The building material sometimes varied – stone or log might be used – but frame was more common and the utility and serviceability of the one-room plan made it workable until well into the twentieth century.

In Fairfax County, where or when the first one-room school house was erected is not known, but for purposes of public education the era was post-Civil War. The last one-room school erected in Fairfax County was built about 1927, on Hooes Road in the Springfield community. It replaced a burned building and served an active student body until the eve of World War II, and was not finally disposed of by the School Board until 1950. Throughout the County these structures still dot the landscape.

Probably few other building types survived so long unchanged, or served their purpose better, than the one-room school. In these structures, form certainly followed function, and once the form was developed, literally hundreds of construction manuals were published – manuals which the Virginians must have used extensively in the era following the establishment of the public school system in 1870. Every one of these manuals which the author has seen began with a rationale for public education couched in terms of patriotism, religion and self-improvement. The opening paragraphs of the Government Printing Office's A Manual of Schoolhouses and Cottages for the People of the South, published in 1868, are fairly typical.

#### THE COMMON SCHOOL

The Common School is the poor man's best friend. Ignorance is his ruin, hemming him in on every side to a narrow and ignoble sphere. The school spans the gorge and makes its passage easy. The parent, indeed, may never be able to cross it, but his children can pass over from their abodes of poverty and ignorance and attain the prizes of wealth, usefulness, honor and power among the first and the best.

The State which is well supplied with good teachers is sure to be well governed. There, property is safe and the person is secure. Schools are our best 'peace establishment.' In them liberty intrenches herself. In war time they are the pledges of national strength and endurance. They are the handmaids of Virtue. They prepare the way for Christianity to go down among the vicious and depraved and draw them out of their misery and crimes to higher planes, where the practice of all things noble, pure, and true are possible.

Washington foresaw that 'the perpetuity of our republican institutions depends upon the intelligence and virtue of the people.' With that view his parting admonition counseled us to 'promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge'; for 'in proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.'

Do not the events of our history point to universal education as the means on which all patriots may unite to make the nation a unit in sentiment, spirit and power?

The Civil War, just completed when the above manual was published specifically for "the people of the south," is mirrored in the text, as is much of the history of the Reconstruction era, the era when the Legato School was built.

Any rationale for the public school was then still resisted in some quarters. As late as 1874, by which time the Legato School was being considered, the Superintendent of Fairfax Schools reported to the State Board of Education that

There are still many enemies of the system, but the desire for good schools in every neighborhood seems to be stronger than ever.

By 1877 the desire of the local citizen seems to have been strong enough to lead to the construction of the Legato School. Manuals for the construction of schoolhouses were readily available, and were certainly used. In tracing the architectural development of the school, it may be useful to cover certain aspects of the location, planning, construction and equipping of schools from some of the manuals available, specifically as they relate to Legato School.

## SITE

The location should be dry, quiet, pleasant and in every respect be healthy. [Barnard, 1848]

The ground selected should be high and dry, easy of access, and, if possible, should not be less than one acre. The building should be placed in the centre, the cellar dirt thrown up around it, and the lot graded from the building to the edges of the lot; no surface hollows should be left for water to lay in. The lot should be enclosed in a neat, substantial fence . . . A number of shade trees should be planted in the front of the lot, and also in the play-grounds. [Va. School Report, 1874]

## FOUNDATION

Cellar, 2 feet deep, to be dug under the entire building; trenches for foundations and piers, 6 inches deeper, earth to be graded around the outside wall, one foot high, and sloping from building on all sides.

Foundation walls, and piers for centre girders, to be of rubble stone, laid up solidly in mortar to be one foot thick and 6 feet high, from cellar bottom to under side of sills. Stone piers, 3 feet deep, to be built to support posts of outside steps. [Va. School Report, 1874] [Though the Legato School had no cellar, it follows in other particulars the above.]

## CHIMNEY

Chimney flues to be of brick, 12 inches square on inside, built on strong brackets. [Va. School Report, 1874]

## CARPENTER'S WORK

Timber: Sills and Girder, 4 x 8; Floor-beams, 3 x 8; Posts, 6 x 6; Window Studs and Plates, 4 x 6; Filling-in-Studs, 2 x 6; Inside Partition Studding, 2 x 4 - doubled around doors; Ceiling Joists, 2 x 8; Rafters, 3 x 6; Floor-bridging, 2 x 3. Rafters and ceiling joists to be strongly trussed with plank. The outside of walls and roof to be sheathed with hemlock boards. Corner boards and siding to be of pine. Roofs to be covered with A 1 sawed shingles; Valleys &c., flushed [sic] with tin. [The Legato School seems always to have had a tin roof.]

Roofs to project 3 feet, ceiling with narrow boards to under side of rafter. Cornice to be moulded, and tin or zinc gutters and leaders put up . . .

Sashes 1 1/2 inch thick, hung with cords and weights in 1 1/4 inch pine box frames . . . Floors to be Norway pine, 1 1/4 inch thick. Window and door casings to be 4 1/2 inches wide, with 2 1/2 inch back moulding. [Va. School Report, 1874]

#### PAINT

A little ingenuity will secure much beauty with two colors, the principal point being to avoid heavy masses of unbroken tint.

Where the whole of the outside woodwork is painted, the best effect will be found in employing three or four different colors. One of these should always in the country be an olive or brownish green, to recall and as it were tie the building down to the general surface of grass and earth about it. The other tints may be varieties of the same green, made by modifying it with blue, yellow or brown. This with the roof painted a brownish red, using any of the red mineral pigments now on the market, will give it a pleasant effect, especially if touches of red are introduced at different points in the mass of green, as on window sashes, brackets, ends of rafters, panel mouldings of doors, turned work, etc. If a more lively impression upon the eye is desired the indispensable olive green may be boldly associated with the red and violet which will complete the full color scale.

Inside the building decoration must necessarily be restrained . . . Ceilings should be white for sake of their reflected light. Floors and woodwork offer some opportunity for a picturesque effect . . .

Doors and wainscot may have panels of one wood and framing of another . . . Cap mouldings of wainscots may be dark wood and panels or other members may be painted, leaving the remaining parts natural or of a different color. Bronze green framing may have Indian red panels or vice versa and so on. All these things help to 'dress up' a room, and though thought too violent for private dwellings they are not for a school house and do much to keep it looking bright and fresh with out increasing the cost. [Clark, 1880]

#### WINDOWS

Windows should be inserted only on two sides of the room, at least three and a half or four feet from the floor . . . There should be no windows directly back of the teacher, or on the side towards which the scholars face . . . [Manual, 1848]



Blackboard, teacher's platform and remnants of desks, Clifton School, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1972

### SCHOOL BELL

A large bell should ring out the hour for school from the belfry loud enough to be heard all over the village or district. If grown up persons must be reminded of the return of the hour of prayer when the welcome duties of the sanctuary are to bring consolation and repose from care, how much more do children in the midst of their glee and innocent amusement need to be admonished that school time is at hand. [Manual . . . , 1868]

### INSIDE FINISH

Inside walls to be plastered – two coats, and whitewashed.

The School-room to be wainscoted 3 feet high, and the Vestibules 4 feet high. [Va. School Report, 1874] (see next page)

### INTERIOR FURNISHINGS

Articles Indispensable in Schools of Every Grade:

A clock.

As much blackboard, or black surface on the walls of the schoolroom, and the recitation rooms as can be secured. A portion of this black surface should be in full view of the whole school . . .

All the appendages to a blackboard, such as chalk, crayons, and a rubber of soft cloth, leather, or sheepskin, and a pointer.

A map of the district, town, county & state.

A terrestrial globe, properly mounted, or suspended by a wire.

The measure of an inch, foot, yard, and rod, marked off on the edge of the blackboard, or on the wall.

Real measures of all kinds, linear, superficial, solid, and liquid; as a foot rule, a yard-stick, quarts, bushels, an ounce, pound, etc.; for the exercise of the eye and hand.

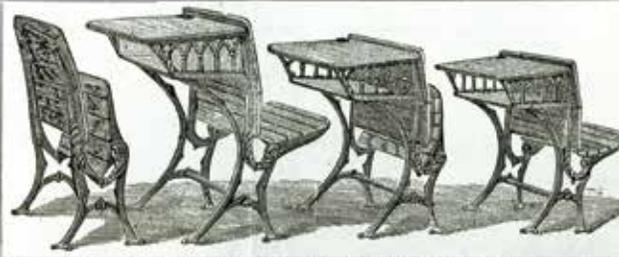
Vases for flowers and natural grasses.

## NEW AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF OUR PATENT SCHOOL FURNITURE.

### The Gothic Curved-Back Desk, with Folding Seat and Rest.

1st.—This Desk is admitted to be the most comfortable of any. The **Curved Back and Seat** were designed by Prof. Cutter, the eminent physiologist, and are true to anatomical principles: the inclination of the former and the curve of the latter are so correct that they conform exactly to the person of the occupant, and force the pupil to an easy, upright and healthy position.

2d.—The Desk is provided with an **Adjustable Foot Rest**, shown in the engraving, which affords a most enjoyable relief from the fatigue of sitting. The pupils being more comfortable when their feet are on the Rest, *keep them there*, thus preventing the noise from constant scraping on the floor. These Foot Rests contribute as much to the ease of the pupils as the Foot Rests in Railway Cars contribute to the comfort to the traveler. They are found in *our Desks alone*, and are a



3d.—A perfect noiseless seat hinge is used, with **Three Stops**, and no strain on the bolt. [which for actual use

we send out. By actual test, they have sustained a weight of over 1,600 pounds without injury.

could be dispensed with entirely.] This is the case with no *other Desk*, wherein a bolt is used in the seat joint, and is a peculiar feature of *extreme importance*.

4th.—The seat, when folded, almost meets the back of the Desk, but *never touches it*, and allows the spaces between each desk to form almost as free passage way as in the aisles, and entirely unimpeded by **Any Projection Whatever**.

5th.—In folding or opening the Seat, it is impossible to catch the clothing, pinch the fingers, or otherwise cause discomfort.

6th.—The Iron in the Castings is so distributed, as to secure the greatest possible strength where the *most pressure comes*, while the proportions of the Desk and ornamented Gothic Castings are tasteful and elegant. In addition, **We Guarantee** every casting

**THE GOTHIC DESK** has been adopted annually, for **Four successive Years**, in the **Philadelphia Public Schools**.

### The Gothic Inclined-Back Desk, with Curved Folding Seat.

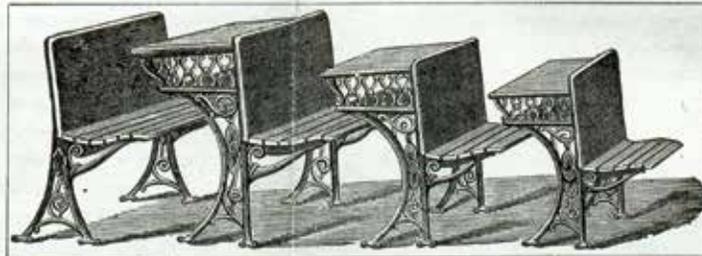
This Desk, in appearance, comfort and strength resembles closely, and is similar to the **Gothic Curved-Back Desk**, as above. **Quality and size are the same**. The back is not so decided in curvature, but is inclined at an angle which, with the curved seat, conforms to the shape of the body, and is extremely comfortable.



The Foot Rest is omitted, as well as the Patent Silvered Ink Well and Cover, an ornamented iron one being furnished in its place. The handsome and strong castings, with compact folding curved seat and wide shelves, will be specially noticed. For a medium priced Patent Desk this is unsurpassed, and is fully guaranteed.

### The Patent Standard Desk, with Curved Seat.

This handsome Desk has been constructed with special reference to providing a substantial, comfortable and compact Desk for District Schools, at or near the cost of the ordinary "Home-made" or Pine Furniture, but far superior in durability, comfort and appearance. It has all the advantages in Curved Seat, Inclined Back, Wide Shelf, and



Handsome Castings, that are incorporated in the Gothic Patent Desks as above. The sizes are precisely the same. In cases where the funds are limited, this will be found to be specially adapted, and is *positively* the **Strongest Desk** in the market. The Iron Frames can be readily **Re-wooded**, and will last for generations.

SEND FOR DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUES OF ABOVE FURNITURE, &c., J. A. BANCROFT & CO., PHILAD'A.

An inkstand, fixed into the desk, with a lid, and with a pen-wiper attached.

A slate, iron-bound at the corners and covered with list, or India-rubber cloth, for every desk, with a pencil-holder and sponge attached . . . [Barnard, 1848]

#### TEACHERS PLATFORM

A liberal provision for the teacher's wants shows an appreciation which can be manifested in no other way so acceptably. Although the teacher is not confined to any particular part of the room, yet custom and convenience have indicated a situation in front of the school, from which the attention of every study may be instantly commanded, the signals of order announced, and general and special exercises conducted. A platform about five feet by six, or six feet square, with a table on the front, has been generally adopted . . . It is customary to raise the platform to the height of one or two steps – say six to twelve inches. [Manual, 1868]

#### BLACKBOARD

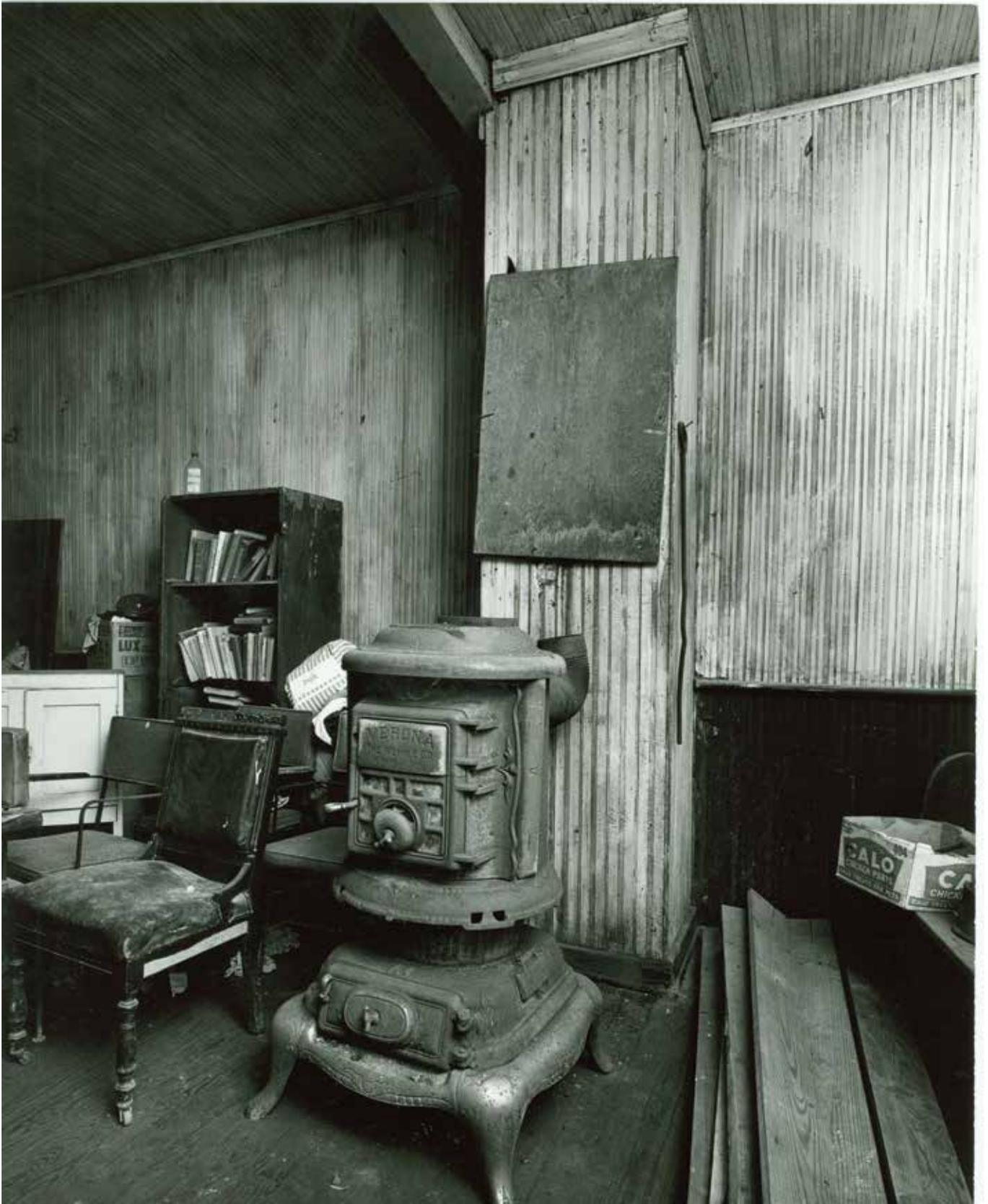
The material for blackboard is white pine, white wood, or other similar grained wood. Yellow pine and some of the hard woods have a coarser and unequal grain, that make them unfit for this purpose. The stuff should be an inch to an inch and a half thick, thoroughly seasoned, planed smoothly, sand papered down, and set in a frame at the ends so that they may be crowded together in case of shrinking.

Blackboard paint – In color, it should be dark, nearly black. It must be durable as the hardest varnish, yet not glossy. Its surface should be slightly gritty, so as to catch every touch of the crayon, without being harsh or rough. The oil paints become smooth and glossy with wear; to prevent this, add a small quantity of the finest flour or emery or pumice-stone before using. [Manual, 1868]

#### DESKS

It is better for each pupil to be seated at a desk by himself . . . The size of a single desk with seat is two feet in front by two and a half in rear . . .

Each pupil is separated from every other one. It leaves him less exposed to temptations to disorder, and relieves the teacher of the severest part of that exacting care which exhausts the strength and wastes the nervous energies of the stoutest constitutions. [Manual, 1868]



Verona stove, manufactured by the Wehrle Company, Newark Ohio, in the Clifton School in 1972,  
photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett



Rear of Public School No. 18, Marshall, Fauquier County, showing woodshed and relation of sanitary facilities to school, similar to Legato School, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1969

### INK-WELLS

The waste of ink and the destruction of clothes by accidents in a school during any single year has been computed to be greater than the cost of furnishing every desk with a permanently attached inkwell. The ink cup . . . is a common form used for this purpose. It is fitted to the desk by boring first to a depth of a quarter of an inch with an auger the size of the flange, than one of lesser size deep enough to receive the cup . . .

Some simple contrivance is needed to cover the ink-cup, for the double purpose of preventing the pupils from taking the cup out at any time, and to guard against evaporation. [Manual, 1868]

### STOVE

A good stove will not waste more than a fourth of its heat. Of those in common use for country schools where wood is abundant, the style known as the six plated revertible flue is regarded as most economical of fuel . . . The best arrangement for warming a room is by a stove placed in the centre . . . [Manual, 1868]

### WOOD SHED

A wood-house is always needed. A shed for the wood can easily be built when a better building cannot be prepared. Then the wood can be procured months in advance of cold weather, cut up, piled and be in readiness for use. The habit of using green wood is a wasteful one. It takes more wood; the steam generated cracks the stove and rusts the pipes. The temperature cannot be properly regulated with it. The gases which it emits are often offensive and injurious to health. And then, it is an unreasonable tax on the teacher to add the task of seasoning the fuel to conducting the school. [Manual, 1868]

### PRIVIES

Two double privies to be fitted up in yard, 8 x 14 feet, vaults 6 feet deep, with seats, risers, lids &c., in the most approved manner, with 3 x 8 inch beams for floors, covered in narrow plank, 1 1/4 inch thick, mill worked, and covered with 3 to 6 inch rafters, sheathed with roof plank and tinnes, same as building. Also in the centre of each, carry up a large stench pipe running out above the roof . . .

The teacher, out of respect to common decency, will see that nothing in connection with the establishment becomes a disgrace to the school nor a nuisance to the neighborhood; but the officers will not neglect their share of the duty, by having the vaults cleaned and supplied with lime, woodashes, and other strong disinfectants during the hot season. [Manual, 1868]

#### OTHER FURNISHINGS

We are not yet done furnishing the school room. There remains to be supplied a variety of lesser articles. To name them will generally suggest their use and importance. As accompaniments of the stove, a poker, shovel, and tongs, a sheet-iron ash pail, and a dish for evaporating water, are needed. A broom, dust brush, and dust pan, mop and mop-pail, scrubbing-brush, wash-basin, and towels, two water buckets and dippers, door mats and scrapers – all familiar and suggestive names, bringing to mind white floors, clean furniture and sweet faces . . . A clock, thermometer, and signal-bell for the teacher. [Manual, 1868]

A reading of the above, and attention to the drawings and photographs which accompany this report, will give a good idea of what the Legato School looked like, inside and out when it was completed, ca. 1877.

Several changes had been made in the structure by the time it was acquired by the County in 1970. These may be briefly catalogued:

1. The ceiling had been lowered to create a second floor and windows placed in both gable ends.
2. Partitions had been placed across the center of the building, creating two rooms, and a hallway to the left rear.
3. The stoop at the front had been replaced with a shed porch across the entire façade.
4. An addition had been made to the rear.
5. The belfry had been removed and the space closed.
6. A new chimney had been constructed from basement to ridge of roof, replacing the original flue from the ceiling to ridge line.

#### METHOD OF MOVING

In order that the building might move quickly and without the expense of removal of power and telephone lines from its original site

to its present location, the later porch and shed additions were removed. The roof was then lifted from the structure at the eaves line, and moved separately from the body of the structure.

At the new site a foundation was dug approximating the original foundation (a cinder block foundation faced with stones from the original was constructed). The body of the structure was placed on this foundation, and the roof lifted to its position and secured.

Unfortunately no careful photographing or drawing of the building either on its original site, with all its additions and changes, or of the work on the structure was accomplished. New rafters in the roof, for example, eliminated evidence of the belfry and exact location of the original chimney. These must therefore be reconstructed from memory of the evidence as it existed prior to the move, from the existence of these features in other one-room buildings in the area, and from pre-1877 school construction manuals.

Fortunately, enough evidence survives the undocumented changes, and enough evidence exists in two other buildings of the type in the area, to come up with a composite school of the circa 1877 era, and this must become the thrust of the restoration.

#### Exterior Appearance

It was clear from examining the physical evidence, in sawn framing members and different frames and sash, that all openings to the rear of the structure, and the second floor window in the front were later openings, and these were all closed.

The room to the rear was known to be a later addition, as was the shed porch across the front. A 1923 photograph of the school showed the original stoop, without roof, and the archaeological program carried out at the school by Woodson High School students uncovered the footings and dimensions of the original stoop. The stoop can be replaced in accordance with the visual evidence of the photograph and the dimensional archaeological evidence.

All of the sash has survived as have several shutters. The broken glass in the sash can be replaced with older glass salvaged from structures being demolished. Louvered shutters can be duplicated from the existing two-panel shutters and missing shutter hardware replaced.

One of the double doors was in near perfect condition; the other had lost one of its panels and part of a stile and had been badly repaired. It should be restored, using all of the remaining original material, and only such new material as is absolutely necessary.

Three other exterior features remain to be reconstructed – the belfry, the chimney and the wood shed.

Within the memory of several teachers and students who attended Legato, there was no belfry, and the school bell was on a pole in the front yard. Clear evidence of the belfry framing existed at the front gable and ridge line, however, and several other schools inspected had a belfry. In addition, the manuals recommended a belfry, and most elevations and plans in these manuals showed one. Perhaps the belfry at Legato was blown down in a storm, perhaps it was simply too difficult to keep in repair and was replaced by the bell in the yard. At any rate, the evidence is clear in support of a belfry, and the belfry on Public School No. 18 in Marshall, Fauquier County, can be used as the stylistic example of a belfry to be constructed for the Legato School. The two schools are almost identical in design and dimensions, and within a decade of each other in date, so that within the context of a composite school of the era, the reconstructed belfry is desirable.

The chimney had also been changed, and moved somewhat to the rear to provide outlets for both rooms created when the first floor was partitioned. Evidence existed, however, for an opening at the ridge line in the approximate center of the classroom area. Framing members for the ceiling were replaced in that area when the ceiling was lowered, so that there was no comparable opening here. The original floor of the school survived, however, the outline of the protective plate beneath the stove remained. This lined up with the opening in the roof. Since within the memory of surviving students and teachers there had been a stove in the center of the room, with a pipe to the flue above, and there was no evidence of a chimney having gone through the floor of the school, it was clear that the flue had extended only from the ridge line to the ceiling. This was borne out by evidence in the manuals, and in other schools visited so that the ceiling-to-roof flue can be reconstructed.

According to teachers and students, there was no wood shed and wood was stored in the open. Inasmuch as this would have been an impractical, and possibly a later arrangement, the evidence in construction manuals of the pre-1877 era was examined, and all recommended wood sheds. When two similar schools were examined, one in Loudoun County, and one in Fauquier, both were found to have wood sheds. Within the context of a composite school of the era a wood shed can be built to the rear of the Legato School. In placement, dimensions and design, it can be copied from the Marshall school in Fauquier County.

#### Interior Appearance

When the structure was moved to its permanent site, all interior partitions were removed, with the exception of the partition between the entranceway and the school room. This extended to the eaves line and it was clear from framing, plastering and wainscot that it had been an original partition, separating the classroom from the vestibule area.

This partition also provided some of the structural evidence that the ceiling had been lowered. Framing members in the lowered ceiling

were milled and different from framing members in this partition and the outer walls of the building, which were either hewn or more crudely sawn. In addition, the marks of lath and plaster were evident behind the lowered level of the floor and were continuous on vertical framing members to the eaves line. Combined with oral recollections, this indicates that there was no second floor room. This is corroborated by the appearance of the other one-room schools and supports the raising of the ceiling to the eaves level. This also means removal of the stair.

It was evident from other schools, and from the manuals, that there would have been some means of access to the attic crawl space. Sound building practices would have dictated an opening both for ease of repairs and for purposes of fighting fire. A scuttle should be placed where the stair was built when the school was remodeled into a residence in the 1930's. The 1930's construction of the stair, and new framing members in the lowered ceiling, eliminated the evidence of the actual location of the scuttle, but in other area schools it was in the vestibule, so that position can be approximated.

Only one other change should be made to the interior. The plaster was removed in 1970 when the partitions were removed, but the evidence that the interior above the wainscot had always been plastered is overwhelming. All walls and the ceiling should be replastered.

Electricity was added to the structure at the time it was moved - though, unfortunately, heating and air conditioning were not, and remain to be added at a later date.

The floors should be scrubbed, and no mechanical sanders or paint used. It is felt that mechanical sanding would destroy the patina of age on the floor, would erase worn areas showing use patterns and placement of the stove. Sanding would also remove nail heads making the floors less secure and usable. There is no indication that the school floors have ever been painted in any manner, so that they should not be painted in the restored structure. When the floor is cleaned, evidence of teacher's platform, students desks, etc., should be visible, and their placement and position documented.

### Furnishings

Though no teacher's platform, blackboard and desks were in the Legato School when it was acquired they can be secured from another Fairfax County school. Such items survive in the two-story building of a slightly later date at Clifton. Since their dimensions are correct for the Legato School, and our restoration plan is for a typical school, they should be acquired (after first being photographed in their original context) and moved to the Legato School for reinstallation.

Both the Belle Aire School and the Clifton School, from which materials and furnishings can be acquired, are in ruined condition. The

Belle Aire School has been partially burned and is near collapse. The Clifton School has been unoccupied for some years, is open to the weather and in an advanced state of decay. There should therefore be no hesitation in salvaging material from these structures – since such salvage would insure their preservation.

Future Work

One of the Legato School privies still exists at the original site. This was certainly an integral part of the school, and ought to be moved to the new site in Fairfax, where its approximate relation to the structure can be reestablished. As the structure now stands it offers less than a complete picture of the ca. 1877 school.

There is no reason why the relocated privy should be considered visually offensive on the new site. Its presence there will complete the school restoration, make interpretations of the restored structure easier and more complete, and perhaps evoke more vivid memories of life at the one-room school than does the structure itself.

Conclusion

The Legato School, if restored as recommended, would offer a composite picture of the one-room school in Fairfax County in the period 1878–1929. Since its restoration can be based on the physical evidence provided by the structure and by the written and oral records, and all suggested changes are based on evidence in school construction manuals and other existing area schools, it will possess considerable historical and architectural integrity as well. The structure would then be an accurate and meaningful commemoration of a century of public education in Fairfax County.

**76. INK-WELLS.**—The waste of ink and the destruction of clothes by accidents in a school during any single year has been computed to be greater than the cost of furnishing every desk with a permanently attached ink-well. The ink-cup, represented in Fig. 35, is a common form used for this purpose. It is fitted to the desk by boring first to the depth of a quarter of an inch with an auger the size of the flange, then with one of lesser size deep enough to receive the entire cup. The position of the ink-well for a double desk is in the centre of the level space at the top, so that the two pupils occupying the desk may use it jointly.



Fig. 35. Ink-cup.

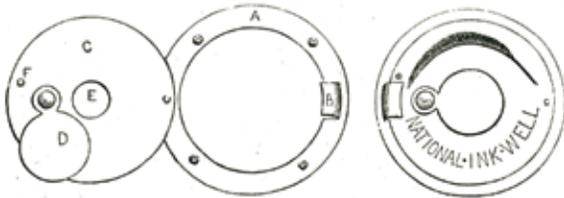


Fig. 36. Cover for Ink-well.

A is a metallic ring fastened to the desk; B, flange raised to receive C (the cover) when turned and pressed under the flange, which holds it tightly; D, the cap with which to close the pen hole E, and prevent evaporation.

Detail of ink well of type used in Fairfax County Public Schools, from Manual of School-houses and Cottages for People of the South, 1868, copy by Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1972.

V.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESTORATION, USE AND UPKEEP

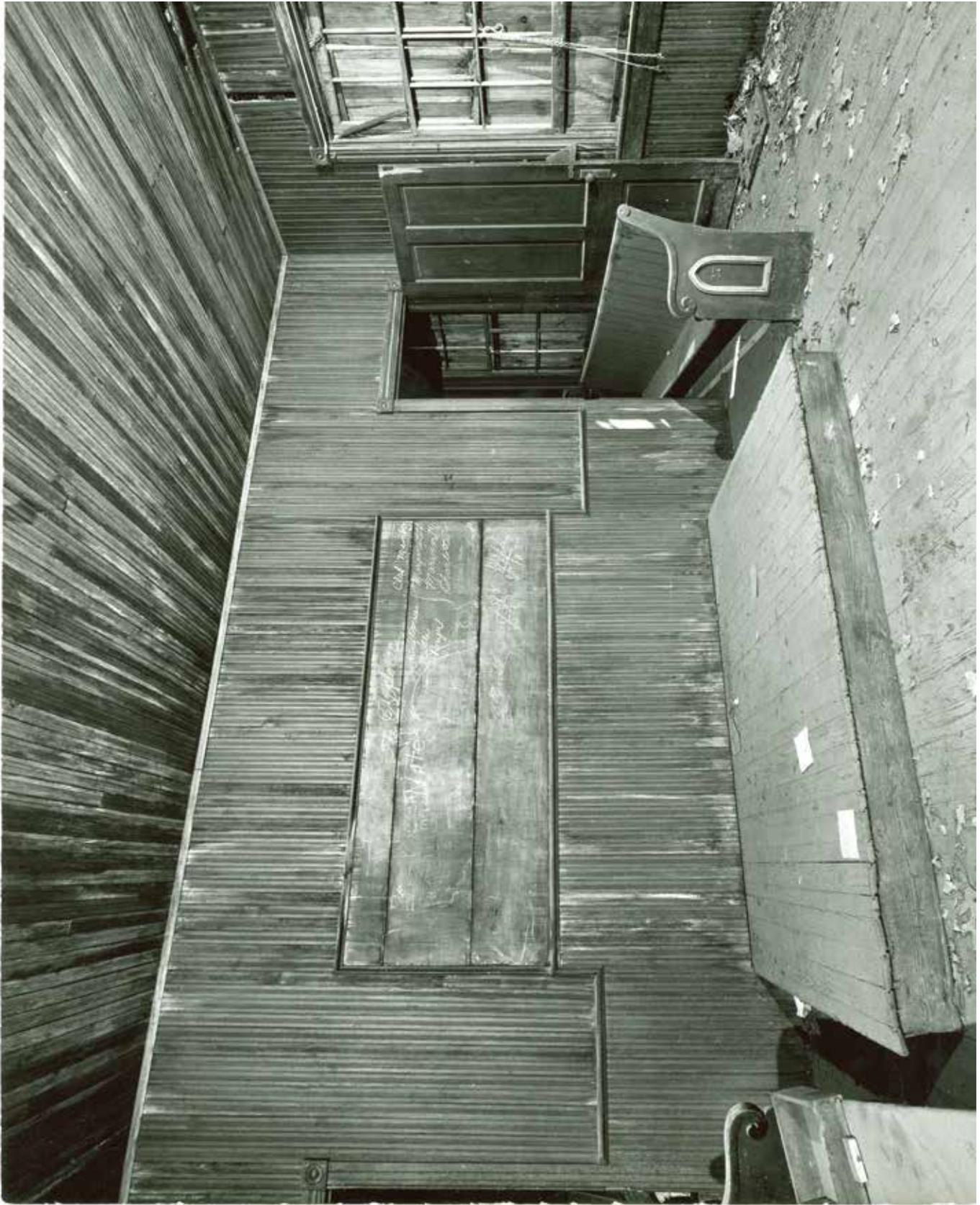
By Virginia B. Peters and Tony P. Wrenn

I. Restoration – Exterior

- A. Remove stone stoop placed when the new foundation was laid, and replace with wooden stoop, of dimensions and design appearing in early photograph of school, evidence of which was uncovered during the archaeological excavation at the original site.
- B. Replace all glass with panes of same size, to be acquired from late nineteenth century structures being demolished for widening of Route 7 in Loudoun County. Put all windows in working order.
- C. Replace missing shutter hardware with hardware to be acquired from the remains of the Belle Aire School.
- D. Copy remaining shutters, where missing, place on all windows with appropriate hardware, and put in working order so they may be opened, and securely closed and locked.
- E. Repair left half of double door, retaining all possible parts of the original and hang with intact right half, using appropriate hardware, lock to be in working order.
- F. Rebuild center chimney, using placement and style of that at Public School No. 18, Marshall, flue to reach to ceiling level only, with sufficient roof and ceiling bracing and sheathing.
- G. Rebuild belfry, in accordance with existing evidence in the school before the new roof was added, using the belfry on Public School No. 18, Marshall, as the example to be copied.
- H. Place woodshed to rear of school, copying example at Route 15 School, Oatlands.
- I. Move boys' outhouse from original site at Legato to present site, build duplicate on opposite side, and build wood screen for both, copied from existing screens still in place at Public School No. 18, Marshall. Landscape appropriately.
- J. Landscape in accordance with existing school manuals of the ca. 1878 era (see Bibliography) leaving adequate open space, landscaping to be accomplished by a local garden club which will assume supervision of upkeep.
- K. Paint exterior, white for walls, dark green for roof and shutters.



Public School No. 18, Marshall, Fauquier County, same era and general style as Legato School, with belfry and chimney placement proposed for Legato School, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1969



Teacher's platform, blackboard and interior finish, Clifton School, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1969

## II. Interior

- A. Add heating and air conditioning, with outlets as inconspicuously placed as possible, and so installed as to do minimal damage to original parts of the structure. The structure may then be used year around, and display items may be placed in the restored school without fear of damage from extremes of heat, cold, and moisture.
- B. Move ceiling back to original level at eaves line, consistent with existing architectural evidence.
- C. Remove present stair, and repair ceiling, constructing scuttle to the roof crawl space, consistent with evidence in other existing school in the area.
- D. Repair and replace all missing wainscot, copying original where replacement is necessary.
- E. Replace plaster on school room and vestibule walls and ceilings.
- F. Scrub floors, do not sand, and apply oil or wax. Note carefully, and record, evidence of use patterns, placement of desks, teachers platform, stove, etc., which should become clearer when the floor is cleaned.
- G. Acquire teacher's platform and blackboard from Clifton School and place in central location on rear wall of school, in same relationship to each other they maintained in Clifton School.
- H. Acquire desks, (complete or portions) from Clifton School for use in Legato. Do not place permanently.
- I. Acquire electric lighting fixtures similar to those in Public School No. 18, Marshall, from a derelict school, and place in ceiling, in positions approximating those from which removed, and in working order.
- J. Paint interior walls, ceiling and wainscot - white for ceilings, beige for plaster walls, darker beige for wainscot and trim. Treat teacher's platform as floor, and clean blackboard with soap and water, maintaining original surface.
- K. Acquire stove from the Clifton School, for use at Legato.

## III. General Observations

- A. In copying features from other schools - chimney, belfry, woodshed, outhouse screens - photograph original, copy

exactly at Legato, and maintain a permanent written and photographic record of the school from which the feature was copied.

- B. In removing items from other schools, photograph in situ, before removing, and maintain permanent written and photographic record of the school from which attained. Shutter hardware, teacher's platform, desks, lighting fixtures, and other items acquired from any source should be documented for public record purposes in the same manner.
- C. All items acquired for the Legato School should be accessioned in proper manner, keeping a permanent record of where, from whom, and when acquired, and the history of the item to include manufacturer, ownership and use. A reading should be made of all minutes of the School Centennial Committee and Legato School Sub-Committee and all persons who offered items to furnish the school should be contacted. Items should be studied to determine their usability or appropriateness in the school, and, if accepted, accessioned in the above manner. A listing of owner and items not acquired should also be maintained for future reference and use.
- D. Establish a Legato School Collection in the Virginia files, Fairfax County Public Library, and place all photographic and other materials collected by the Research Committee in that collection. This will provide protection and permanent filing, while insuring the future availability of the collection to scholars, students, and interested individuals. Add to the collection, insuring that in the future all school publications, annual reports, etc., are added as published.

#### IV. Marking and Publicizing the Structure

- A. Place a simple wooden sign in front of the structure, on a wooden post. Do not attach to structure. Copy lettering from Public School No. 18, Marshall. Suggested legend:

The Legato School, constructed in 1877-78, at Legato Road and Little River Turnpike, Centreville District. Used as school until 1929. Moved to this site in 1970-71, and restored as a composite school of the 1878-1929 era, to mark the Centennial of Public Education in Fairfax County, 1870-1970.

- B. Publish the Legato School Report, text and graphic material in sufficient copies to make it available to all schools, public libraries, and interested individuals, including visitors to the school.

- C. Arrange a suitable dedicatory ceremony upon the completion of the restoration and opening of the school.

V. Uses for the School

- A. The school should be used as a teaching tool in the system, both through use of the published report in the classroom, and through field trips to the school. Appropriate material should be developed to make the field trip meaningful.
- B. Acquire suitable portable furniture, so that the structure can be used as a meeting place for scouts, garden clubs, and other groups, establishing a regular schedule of use and the machinery through which special uses can be arranged and scheduled.
- C. Encourage use of the grounds and structure for art, craft, and other special exhibits, including garden and flower shows, and antique shows.
- D. Establish a series of regular outdoor concerts, during the months when this is permitted by the weather, on the grounds and parking lot to the rear of the building, utilizing instrumental and vocal music groups – popular, classical, band, and jazz – from schools in the Fairfax County School system.
- E. Arrange, using students from the school system as guides, to open the school to the public on a regular basis during weekend hours.
- F. Study additional uses suitable to the building and grounds.

VI. Upkeep

- A. Arrange for maintenance of the restored school in the same manner as other school properties, and on a regular schedule, upkeep to be commensurate with the character of the school when restoration is completed, and undertaken so as to maintain that character.
- B. Arrange for regular upkeep of the grounds, under the supervision of the garden club which undertakes the landscaping.
- C. Keep school locked and shutters closed when building is not in use. Arrangement for keeping key at convenient place, accessible for use at all times, should be made.

VIII. General

Establish a small committee of citizens, with staff assistance from the public schools, which would meet as needed to advise on questions of upkeep, use, support, etc. The membership should include one or more persons who are students in the public school system, a representative of the Fairfax County History Commission, and a representative from the garden club which undertakes the landscaping.

Some simple contrivance is needed to cover the ink-cup, for the double purpose of preventing the pupils from taking the cup out at any time, and to guard against evaporation. These objects are gained in the illustration.



Fig. 37. Teacher's table, No. 1.

77. **TEACHER'S TABLE.**—Fig. 37 represents an approved style of plain table for the teacher, adapted to the wants of a small school where there is a teacher's room or closet.



Fig. 38. Teacher's table, No. 2.



Fig. 39. Teacher's table, No. 3.

Where those conveniences are not provided, larger tables, like those shown in Figs. 38 and 39, are needed for the safe-keeping of books, papers, &c., of various kinds required for daily use in the school.

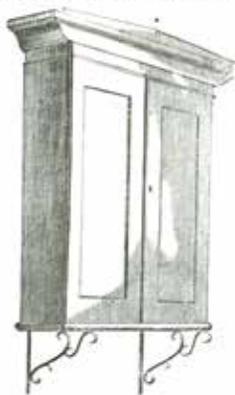


Fig. 40. A Book-case.

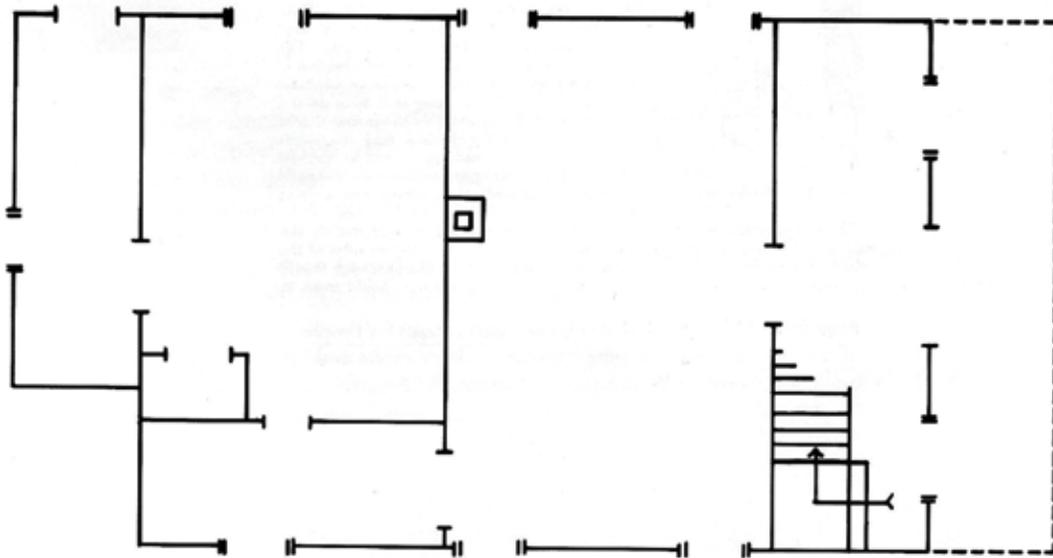
78. The furniture of the teacher's room should comprise two or more chairs, a small writing table, a book case for library, and a closet. When enlarged to adapt it to a recitation room, seats and blackboards will be required.

We would recommend, instead of the brackets shown in the figure to support the book case, a suit of large drawers extending down to the floor for wall maps, charts, &c.

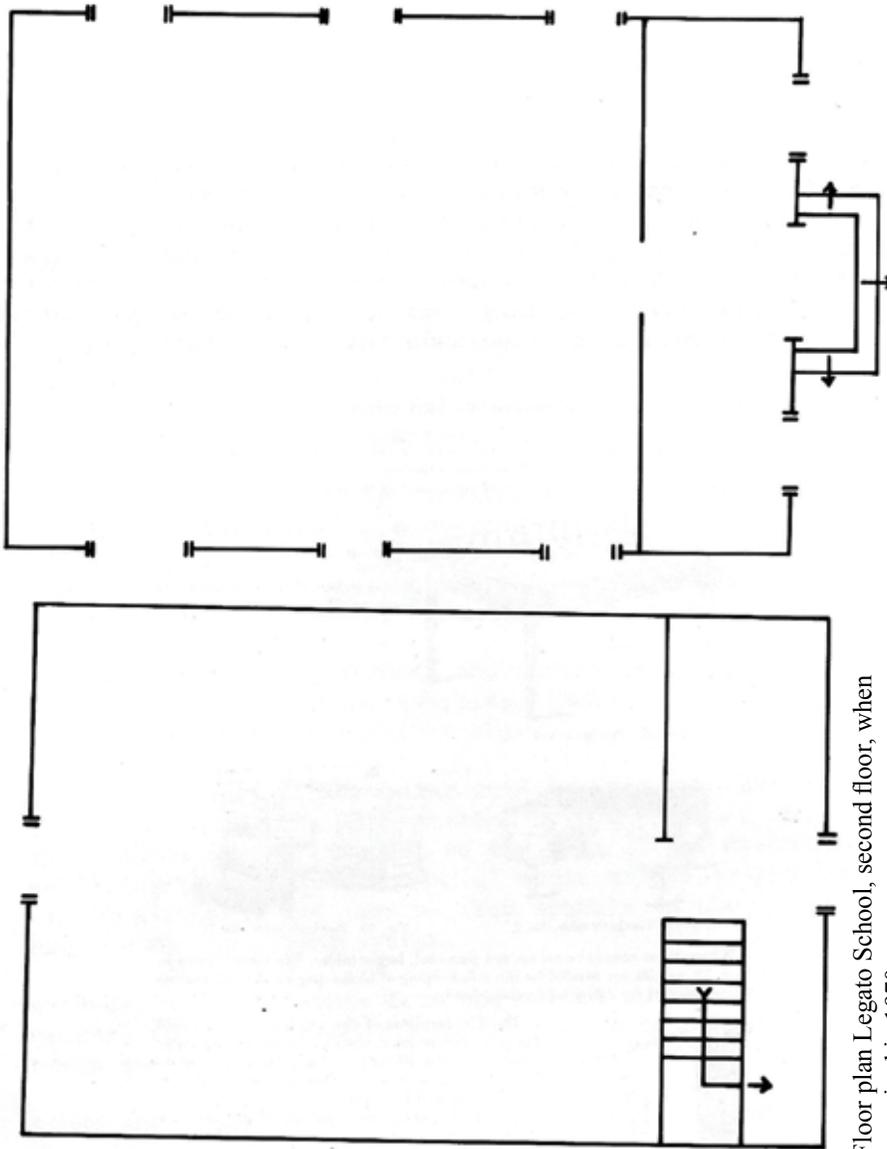
79. **BLACKBOARDS** are indispensable. With them a well qualified teacher can instruct a large class with the same facility as one pupil. The illustrations given on them arrest the attention of children and help to enforce a truth or an explanation. Pupils are fond of working at them in classes. Especially are they important in the instruction of primary scholars. Fifty children may be taught the alphabet and easy reading, as well as the elements of writing, drawing, and arithmetic, easier and easier with blackboards than fifteen can without them.

Their supply should be abundant. Beginning with a fine large one on the wall in rear of the teacher's platform, they should extend to the two sides of the room, covering the vacant spaces between the windows. The upper edge should not be over six and a half feet from the floor. The lower one should come to

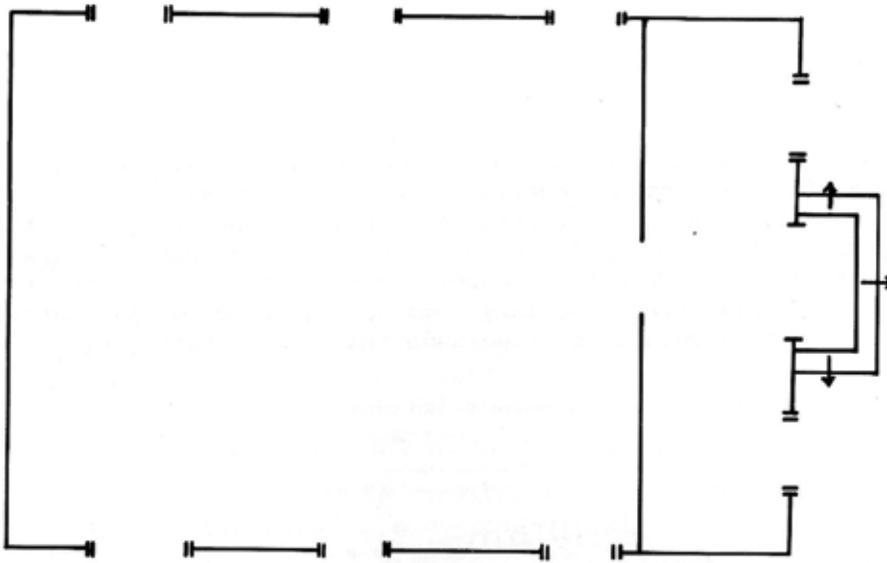
LEGATO SCHOOL - FLOOR PLANS



Floor plan Legato School, first floor, when acquired in 1970.



Floor plan Legato School, second floor, when acquired in 1970.



Original floor plan, one-story, one-room school.

APPENDIX I

PERSONNEL INVOLVED  
IN THE FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL CENTENNIAL  
AND LEGATO SCHOOL RESTORATION

- (A) FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE (Overall direction of the Public School Centennial, including celebrations, research, and publicity):

Representing the Community:

Oscar E. Baughan	Mrs. Harold D. Murray
Thomas P. Chapman, Jr.	Mrs. John E. Onesty,
Mrs. Thomas Corner, Sr.	Co-Chairman
Mrs. William Elvin	Jamison Parker
Mrs. John Hogan	F. W. Robinson
Lee Hubbard	Stacy Sherwood
Anna Krehbiel	Mrs. James Sullivan
Edward R. Moore, Jr.	Edward Wagstaff
Frank Morse	W. T. Woodson, Co-Chairman

Representing associated Fairfax County governmental and other agencies:

Allerton Barnes	Fairfax County Education Association
Dr. John Porter Bloom	Fairfax County History Commission
M. Patricia Carey	Fairfax County Public Library
Edmund Castillo	County Government
Mary Fahringer	Fairfax County History Commission
Edith Moore Sprouse	Fairfax County History Commission
Mayo Stuntz	Fairfax County Historical Society

Representing Fairfax County Public Schools:

Marilyn Biglin	Dr. Beverly Heinle
Elizabeth Burke	Dr. Lonnie J. Hinkle
Samuel J. Coffey	W. Clement Jacobs
Virginia B. Darr	Melvin B. Landes
Warren Eisenhower	Robert N. McKenney
Emma V. Ellmore	Virginia B. Peters
Daniel Fleming	Oswald Robinson
W. Harold Ford	Dr. Mary Rowan
Philip J. Fuller	Dr. George C. Tankard, Jr.
Louis Godla	Ross M. Tucker
John K. Gott	James D. Wooldridge
Mrs. Alvaine Hamilton	

Subcommittees

Oral History:

M. Patricia Carey, Chairman	Frances Nevitt
Virginia Andrus	Ethel Sims
Mrs. Holden Harrison	Ruth Smith
Anna Krehbiel	Audrey Snodgrass

Research and Publication:

Virginia Andrus	Kathryn S. Hogan
Elizabeth Burke	D. Lee Hubbard
M. Patricia Carey	W. Clem Jacobs
Emma V. Ellmore	Robert N. McKenney, Chairman
Dr. Art Hiena	Edith Moore Sprouse
Dr. Lonnie J. Hinkle	Mayo Stuntz

Centennial Professor of History:

John K. Gott

(B) ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF LEGATO SCHOOL:

Students Participating at Dig:

Jeff Carr	Rian Leidelmeyer
Alex Cramer	Ron Leidelmeyer
Paul Davis	Paul Morales
Ellen Derby	Debbie Mulvanitz
Diane Early	Wendy Nicholas
Murray Engler	Phillip Parsons
Paul Erlenborn	Virginia B. Peters, Supervisor
Doug Fry	Ray Strang
David Givens	Anita Wilburne
Walter Gomez	Andy Wolfe
Greg Jones	David Young

A list of all Woodson students under Mr. Baughan (Carpentry) and Mr. Simms (Maintenance & Repair) who have worked on the Legato School:

Maintenance & Repair – William S. Simms, Sr.

Michael Adkins	Robert Ditz
Phil Anderson	David Douglas
Raymond Barile	Steve Freeland
Joseph Blaile	Paul Van Gundy
Tom Cardwell	Richard Hepler
Derrick Cherkas	Rusty Herrick
Douglas Barnes	

Michael Hill  
Michael Hughes  
William Hughes  
Michael Johns  
Stanley Kelly  
Steve Kern  
James Komars  
Garry Lough  
Darrell Luskin  
Richard Mankins  
Steve Martin  
Herby Meadows

Michael McGovern  
Randy Mullins  
Larry Ney  
William Nutter  
Robert Premetz  
Scott Schlarman  
Ben Spears  
Charles Thacker  
Michael Thompson  
John Unterkofler  
Michael Willsey  
William Young

Carpentry – Oscar E. Baughan

Ed Adams  
David Bartlett  
Don Brown  
Alan Byrd  
Marvin Costello  
Hugh Davis  
John Greenway  
Robert Gruenler  
Frank Monroe  
Curtis Morgan  
Robert McFall

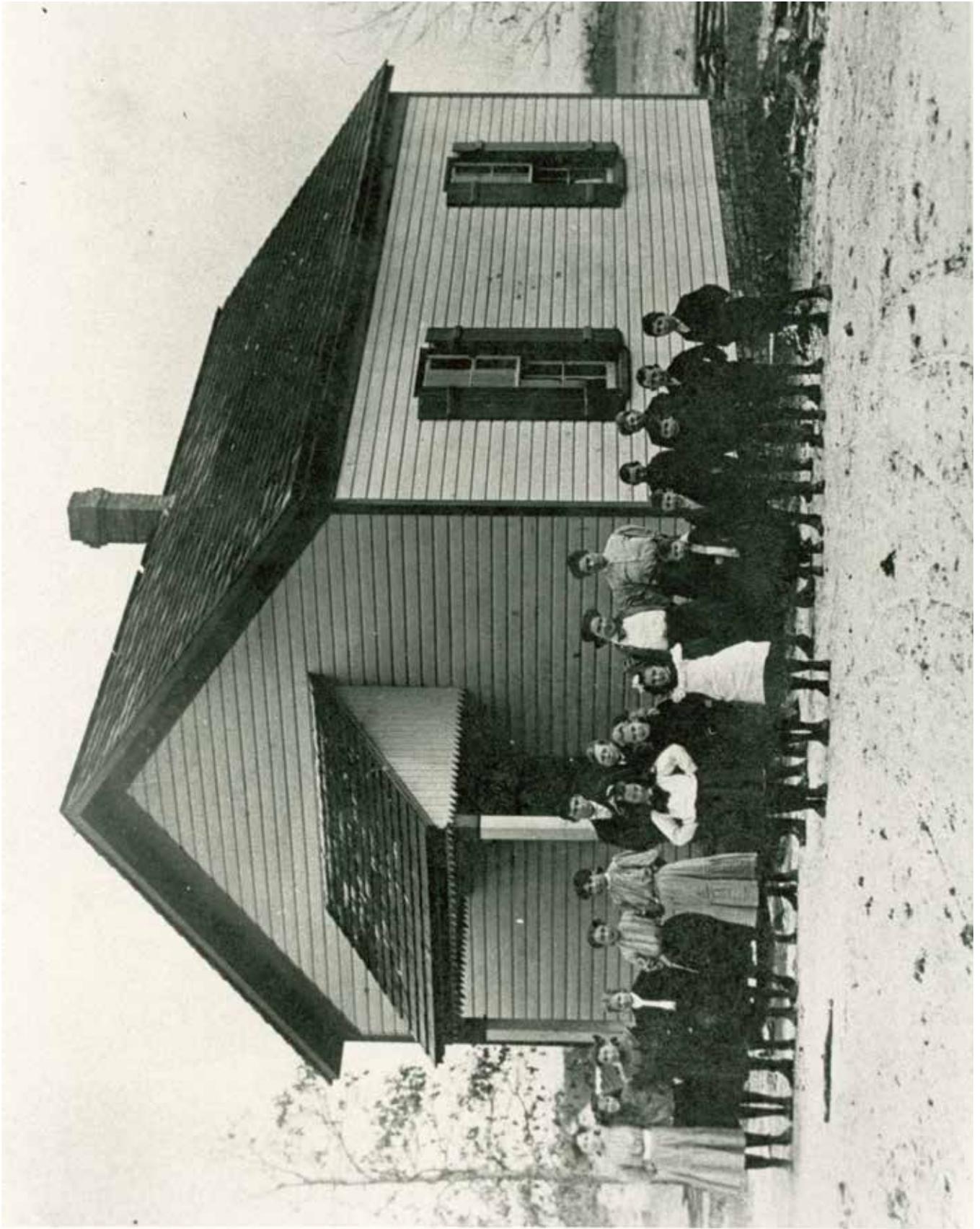
Steph Osterday  
Michael Peoples  
Donald Reed, Jr.  
Tom Riley  
Dennis Rotenberry  
Junior Shackelford  
Fred Shifflett  
Richard Simms  
Robert Spaulding  
Edward Whatley  
Dave Wilsman

Special Education Shop Class – Leo Kerin

Douglas Allender  
Steve Angel  
Kevin Bayse  
Donnie Blankenship  
Jerry Byrd  
David Cox  
James Faust  
Daniel Fernandez  
Francis Ford  
Dennis Forsythe

Garry Fowler  
Donald Gilmartin  
Keith Hunnicutt  
Noel Kellany  
Craig Nelson  
Alan Shelor  
Jimmy Sprague  
Zachary Taylor  
Melvin Thacker  
James Weber

Walter Wheeler



Fairview School, ca. 1910, print Fairfax County Public Schools

APPENDIX II

GOALS AND GUIDELINES,  
FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE, FEBRUARY 3, 1970

Goals

- (1) To establish a school museum in a restored and refurbished building, centrally located, and under constant surveillance to prevent vandalism.
- (2) To establish a well-indexed central storehouse of information pertinent to school history, including oral records, written and documentary material, pictures and photographs, real objects.
- (3) To use the information in this central storehouse as source material for curriculum development, intended for class use, and cross-reference it to library materials.
- (4) To establish a speaker's bureau which would provide outlines for speeches and visual and audiovisual aids, and prepare and maintain a list of speakers available for organizations throughout Fairfax County.
- (5) To publish a paperback history of the first 100 years of Fairfax County Public Schools, to be sold to interested persons at cost or nominal cost.
- (6) To plan and conduct a Countywide dinner or some appropriate observance for retired school personnel at which honor guests might include the oldest living teacher and/or the oldest person in Fairfax County who attended County schools.
- (7) To plan and conduct a ceremony at the opening of the restored schoolhouse.
- (8) To encourage drama groups to prepare either a drama or pageant which could be presented at one or several outdoor locations (such as Wolf Trap amphitheatre).
- (9) To encourage one or more outdoor concerts or other musical events, 1870 style.

## Guidelines

Programs and projects undertaken during the Centennial should –

- (1) Have permanent value.
- (2) Be organized and planned to involve as many citizens, including students, as possible.
- (3) Stress authenticity of demonstrations and materials.
- (4) Demonstrate the value of public education to individuals and to society as a whole.
- (5) Show, by past example, the importance of citizen understanding and support for public education in Fairfax County.
- (6) Provide appropriate credit, in the form of an honor roll, to those contributing labor, materials, financial assistance, and time to the Centennial event.



Ash Grove School, now a private dwelling, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1972.

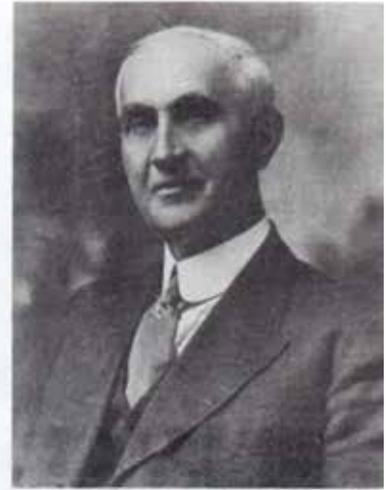
APPENDIX III



Thomas S. Moore, 1870-1871



Daniel M. Chichester, 1871-1878



Milton D. Hall, 1886-1929

FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

1870-1871	Thomas Moore
1871-1878	Daniel McCarty Chichester
1878-1883	Eugene D. Ficklin
1883-1886	Edwin F. Crocker
1886-1929	Milton Dulaney Hall
1929-1961	W. T. Woodson
1961-1969	E. C. Funderburk
1969-1970	Lawrence M. Watts
1970-	S. John Davis



E. C. Funderburk, 1961-1968



Lawrence M. Watts, 1969-1970



S. John Davis, 1970-



Legato School on its original site, 1969, rear view, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett.

APPENDIX IV

THE LEGATO SCHOOL — CHAIN OF TITLE AND LEGAL HISTORY

By John K. Gott and Robert N. McKenney

(All legal records cited below are on file in the  
Fairfax County Court House, Fairfax)

Fairfax County Court, August Court 1877

On the motion of the School Trustees, Fairfax County, Centerville District. It is ordered that G. W. Bryce, Armistead Matthews, B. D. Utterback and G. S. Roby and Thomas A. Murtaugh (any three of whom may act) be appointed Commissioners to go upon the piece of land selected by the said trustees for the use of the said District described in a survey made by H. M. Fairfax, Surveyor and filed with the papers and ascertain the damages to the residue of the tract of land beyond the peculiar benefits derived from the use and occupation of said first mentioned piece of land for public school purposes, and further that they do report whether or not any yard, garden, or orchard, or any part thereof will be invaded if in an incorporated village, any place within 100 yds. of dwelling, or in the County, any place within 400 yds. of a mansion house, without the consent of the owner, and said Commissioners shall meet for the purpose aforesaid on the first day of Sept. 1877.

Fairfax County Court, October Court 1877

The Report of the Commissioners to condemn land for public school purposes, was this day received and ordered that a Rule issue against the land owner to show cause why said Report should not be confirmed. On Monday July 30, 1877, under the direction of John T. Rigg and Jno. D. DeBell; Trustees of Centerville District, I surveyed two lots of land for school purposes, said lots being one at the east, and the other at the west end of a tract belonging to Wm. Ayre and lying on the southside of the Warrenton Pike and bounded by the lands of Jos. Robinson, Millan dower, Alex. Buckley, and Wm. Berkley. The east lot is bounded as follows, Commencing at A. a dead gum tree near a branch a corner of Ayre and Millan dower in Robertson's line, thence N. 16°, W, 8 poles & 6 links to centre of pike, thence with said centre S 80 1/2° W, 29 poles, thence leaving pike S 20 1/2°, E 9 poles & 3 links to a gate on east side of gate in line of Millan dower, thence with said dower line N 78 3/4° E 28 poles and 6 links to beginning containing A. 2 R and 5/8 poles. The west lot is bounded as follows. Commencing at A. a stake in Ayre's line 6 poles east of a stake a corner to

Buckley and Millan dower. Thence S 77 3/4°, W 39 poles to a stake in Buckley's line a corner to Ayre & Buckley, thence N 12 1/4° E. 11 poles and 9 links to centre of pike, thence with said centre N. 78 1/4° E 32 poles thence leaving pike S 20 1/2° E 9 poles and 24 links to Beginning Containing 2 A O R and 37 poles. H. M. Fairfax, Surveyor.

We the Commissioners appointed by the County Court of Fairfax Co., by its order of the 20th day of August 1877, to ascertain what will be a just compensation for each part of the land of the freehold where of Wm. Ayre is tenant as is proposed to be taken by the School Trustees of Centerville District for the use of the public free schools of said District, do certify that on the 1st day of Sept. 1877 the day designated in said order we met together in said part of the land, the limits of which part were then & there described to us as follows, to wit: Beginning at a stake in Ayre's line 6 poles east of a stake, a corner to Buckley and Millan dower, thence S 77 3/4° W 39 poles to a stake on in Buckley's line, a corner to Ayre & Buckley, thence N 12 1/4° E 11 poles and 24 links to Beginning, Containing 2 acres & 37 poles of land.

And after being duly sworn, upon a view of the part aforesaid, & upon such evidence as was before us we are of the opinion & do ascertain that for this said part, and for the damage to the residue of the tract beyond the peculiar benefits to be derived in respect to such residue, the sum of \$36.82 will be a just compensation.

We further certify that the above described tract of land does not invade any garden, yard, orchard, and is not within 400 yds. of any mansion house. Given under our hands, this 1st day of Sept. 1877.

Witness  
Jno. D. DeBell

Commissioners  
George E. Robey

Thos. Murtaugh

Armistead T. Matthews

Fairfax Co. to wit:

I, W. R. Millan, Court of Accounts, do certify that Geo. E. Roby, Thos. Murtaugh and Armistead Matthews, have this day made oath before me, that they will faithfully and impartially ascertain what will be a just compensation for such of the land of the freehold whereof Wm. Ayre is tenant as is proposed to be taken by the School Trustees of the Centerville District for its purposes and will truly certify the same.

Given under our hand, the 1st day of Sept. 1877  
W. R. Millan, Comm.

Fairfax County Court November Court 1877.

On the motion of the School Trustees to condemn land for public school purposes. The Rule awarded in this case against Wm. Ayre, the land owner being now returned execution: it is ordered, that the Report of the Comms., appointed to assess damages be confirmed, and ordered to be recorded. And that the damages awarded in this case be paid to Thos. Moore according to the rights of the parties.

F. D. Richardson—Clerk

Deed Book V/4, p. 345:

November Court 1877 – Report of Surveyor, H. M. Fairfax. On Monday, July 30, 1877, under the direction of John F. Rigg and Jno. D. DeBell, Trustees of Centerville District, I surveyed two lots of land for school purposes, said lots being one at the east and the other at the west end of a tract of land belonging to Wm. Ayre and lying on the south side of the Warrenton pike and bounded by the lands of Jos. Robinson, Millan dower, Alex. Buckley and Wm. Buckley. The east lot is bounded as follows: . . .

The west lot is bounded as follows: Commencing at A, a stake in Ayre’s line 6 poles east of a stake a corner to Buckley, . . . to centre of pike, thence with said centre . . . thence leaving pike . . . to Beg., Containing 2 acres 0 rods and 37 poles.



On Sept. 20, 1877 the Commissioners appointed by the Court to condemn the land met on the property, described as belonging to Wm. Ayre, and decided that \$36.82 was “a just compensation.” At the November Court 1877 the report of the Comm’rs. was accepted and ordered to be recorded and the money paid.

Deed Book Z/8:

p. 85: 30 August 1922 between School Board of Centerville District . . . to County School Board of Fairfax County . . . (cites abolishment of District School Board by Act of Assembly, 24 March 1922) . . .

p. 86: Legato School . . . That certain lot or parcel of land containing 2 A. no rods and 37 poles, which was acquired by the Trustees of Centerville District by condemnation proceedings at the November Term of the County Court, 1877, recorded in Liber V, No. 4, p. 345, described as follows: (same as above) . . .

Fairfax Herald, 8 November 1929:

The Division Superintendent (W. T. Woodson) report Legato School much congested. On motion it was decided to transfer the three upper grades by school bus, to Centerville School.

Deed Book M/13, p. 314:

2 June 1939 . . . between County School Board of Fx. Co., Va. to R. Buckner Winfield . . . at Sept. Term 1934 of Circuit Court the School Board was authorized to sell at public auction real estate, "after first advertising the time, place and terms of sale for 30 days by posting handbills of sale at not less than ten public places in said county . . ." Sale held on 15 April 1939 . . . the highest bid received therefor was a bid made by Gladys Winfield for and on behalf of R. Buckner Winfield, of \$2,050.00 . . . approved by School Board . . . on 5 May 1939. . . to convey to Mr. W- "all of that certain lot or parcel of land located in Centerville Magisterial District . . . known as the Legato School Lot, together with all buildings and improvements thereon . . ."

On August 21, 1969 a contract was negotiated between R. Buckner and Margaret C. Winfield and The Old School House and Bells Subcommittee of the Centennial Committee of the County School Board of Fairfax County transferring the Legato School to the Committee for the sum of \$2,000.00 "to be paid in cash at the time of settlement."

APPENDIX V

LIST OF TEACHERS AT THE LEGATO SCHOOL (NO. 5)  
(for which records exist or for which there was oral  
substantiation)

By Virginia B. Peters

1906 Mary Millan, six months at \$26 per month  
1907 Mrs. M. A. Payne  
1908 Miss Ella Ballard  
1909 Miss Mary Whaley  
1910 Mr. Leo Hains, \$30 per month  
1911 Miss Ruby A. Payne, \$30 per month  
1912 Miss Rosie Buckley, \$30 per month  
1913 Miss Clarise E. Robertson (some question as to year)  
1914 Miss Clarise E. Robertson  
1915 Sadie V. Altman  
1916 No suitable teacher could be found.  
1917 Miss Maudie Burrough, first appointed and then transferred  
to Clifton.  
Salli Bidden then became teacher.  
1918 Same  
1919 No record (possibly Edna A. Miller and/or husband)  
1920 Edna A. Miller  
1921 "Either Miss Maurie Barker or Miss Mary C. Millan"  
1922 Mary Millan  
1923 Mary C. Millan  
1924  
1925 Lillian Millan \$85  
1926 Same  
1927 Same  
1928 Same  
1929 Same



Idylwood School, ca. 1910, courtesy Mrs. Frank Ball.

APPENDIX VI

EXPENSES FOR LEGATO SCHOOL AS RECORDED IN DISTRICT RECORDS WHICH SURVIVE

By Virginia B. Peters and Edith Moore Sprouse

1907	September 28 - paint for Legato	- -
1908	April 1 - wood for Legato (#5)	\$12.00
1909	January 30 - stove for Legato	13.63
	April 1 - wood for Legato	12.00
	July 20 - repairing Legato	- -
1910	October 10 - supplies	24.39
	painting Legato schoolhouse	12.00
	lumber & materials	28.94
	October 28, Elmer Robinson, plastering Legato	8.75
	November 15, work on Legato lumber	22.50 1.50
1911	April, repairing outbuilding	- -
1915	Dec. 3, clearing Legato lot	- -
1916	May 17, wood for Legato 1915 & 1916	12.00
1917	April 6, supplies	1.52
	June, wood	16.00
1918	May 11, wood	15.00
1919	October 3, wood, 1918-1919	16.00
1920	May 3, supplies	40.00
	June 16, wood	16.00
	November 27, wood	21.00
1921	June 25, supplies	5.91
1923	June 4, Mary C. Millan, supplies	2.60
	H. M. Palmer, floor oil, Legato	1.20
	October 5, W. W. Watkins, repairs for Legato	8.30
	November 5, Mary C. Millan reimbursed for blackboards, Legato	4.39
1925	Feb. 5, wood for Legato	18.00
	March 6, H. H. Mills, wood for term, Legato	32.00
	March 6, M. S. Kielsingard, hauling stove to Legato	3.00
	May 5, Cunningham Springless Shade Co., shades for Legato	7.90
	June 5, W. W. Cross, installing bell brought from Jermantown	5.00
	October 5, double desks transferred from Fairfax to Legato	- -
	November 5, repairs at Legato, Sylvester Fox	29.15
	Materials for repairs	2.70
	5 loads of wood (Forest Mills)	20.00

1926	January 5, 5 loads wood (Forest Mills)	\$20.00
	February 5, Fairfax Garage, hauling desks from Fairfax to Legato	32.70
	November 5, Forest Mills, 1 load wood	4.00
1927	January 6, Forest Mills, 4 loads wood	16.00
	February 5, John Sutphin, 1 load wood	5.00



Mountain Gap School, Route 15 near Leesburg, Loudoun County, in 1972, chimney and woodshed similar to those proposed for Legato School, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett.





Belle Aire School, built ca. 1894, 10143 Burke Road, photograph prior to 1908, print Fairfax County Public Schools



Belle Aire School, 1972, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett.



Clifton School, built ca. 1912, Main Street, Clifton, as it appeared in 1968.  
Photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett

Groveton  
1920-1970

6834 Richmond Highway

Now used as administrative offices, this frame two-room school was built on land belonging to Mr. Reid. In 1933 a four-room brick structure superseded this building. (Arlington & Alexandria Globe, Dec. 10, 1970)

Gunston

10708 Gunston Road, or at the intersection  
of County Route #1014

In 1883 Edward Daniels, of Gunston Hall, deeded one acre for a school. This may have been the present Shiloh Baptist Church building, across from the entrance to Gunston. Local tradition has it that this was a school before becoming a church. Another one-room school, now painted pink and converted into a residence, is farther down south on Gunston Road near the entrance of Hallowing Point subdivision. (Fairfax County Deed Book C-5, p. 62)

Gunston Hall

At Gunston Hall an eighteenth-century school building was reconstructed on the original foundations in the 1960's. This was based on an 1832 written description and on a surviving sketch of the building. Materials used were salvaged from a period structure being demolished.

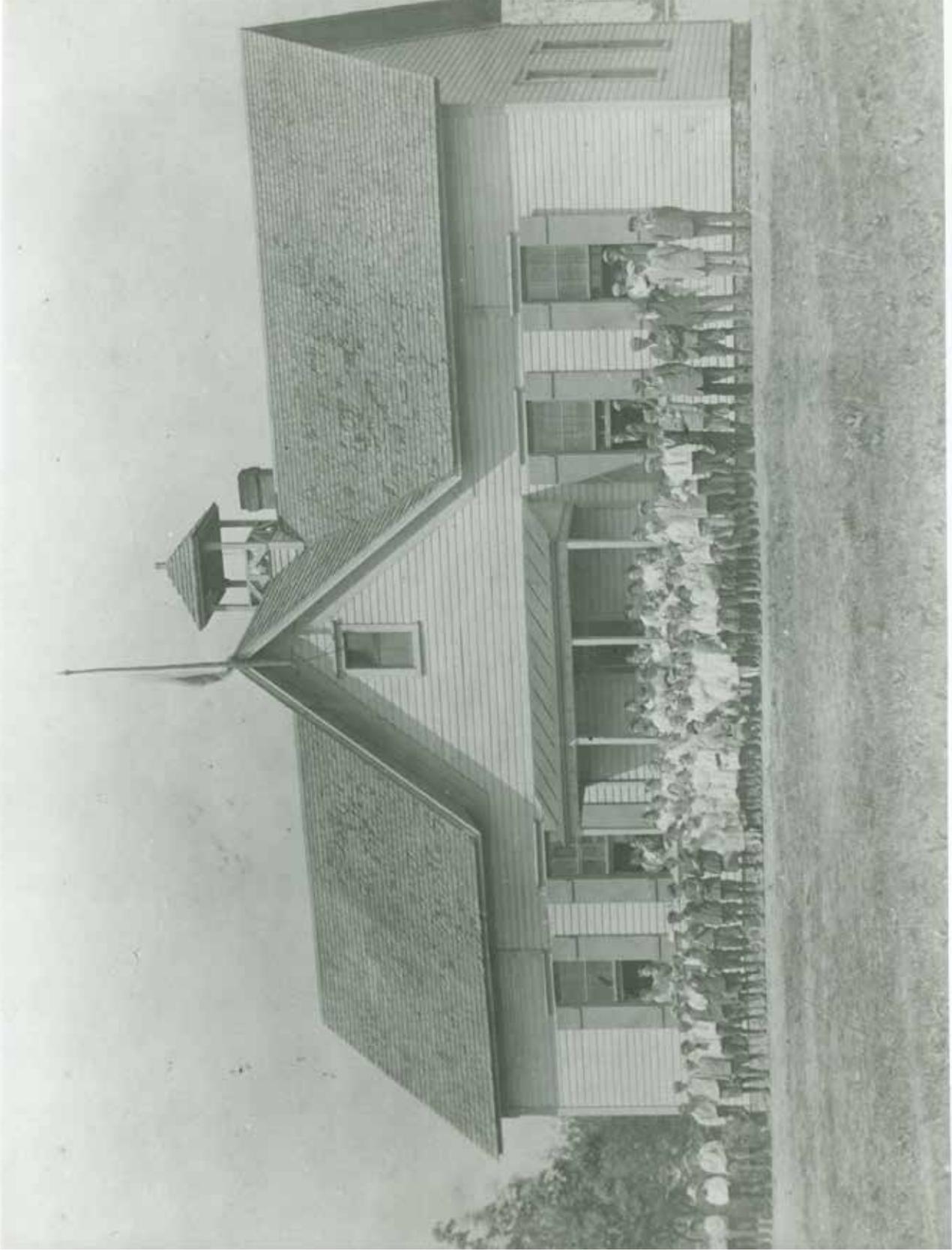
Hat Mark  
c. 1896

5333 Lee Highway, opposite Fairlee Road

This white frame residence, with vestibule at the rear, is a converted one-room school. The green shutters, with diamond-shaped cutouts, may be original. The school was built on land deeded by the Walker family; Edna Walker Stenhouse taught there. In 1910 one of the first grade pupils was Thomas Chapman, later Clerk of the Fairfax County Court.

The Minutes of the County School Board on September 17, 1922, directed that the school was to be reopened for the first to fifth grades. The sixth grade, as it had in the past, was sent to the Oakton School.

The school's name is said to have come from an incident when someone — an Indian, or perhaps a soldier in the Civil War — dropped his hat, which left a mark. (Interviews with Miss Pearl Dunn, Mrs. Rita Covington)



Herndon School, early twentieth century.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Breckenridge.

Herndon  
1875

Breckinridge house, Center Street

This structure was formerly a one-room school, with Mr. Kidwell as its first teacher. Another room was added later. It is now a residence.

Jermantown  
c. 1890-1925

Route 50 at Jermantown Road, east of  
Chilla Villa Motel

Built on S. P. Twombly's land, this one-room frame school was named (as was the road) for Mitt Jerman. One of its early teachers was Mrs. Lucy Schwartz. The structure has been brick veneered and is now a residence.

Lorton Valley  
c. 1878-1933

9723 Gunston Cove Road

This two-room school was converted into a dwelling about 1933 and is now covered with asbestos shingles. It replaced a school built about 1876 which burned. In 1878 John Plaskett gave the land for the present school. The second room was added about 1881. A photograph and list of teachers is in Susan Plaskett's Memoirs of a Plain Family.

Money's

Fox Mill Road and Reston Avenue

A one-room frame building measuring 24' x 13', it was the second school on the site. A porch was added in 1907. The school was sold in 1928 and turned into a residence.

Navy  
1888-1931

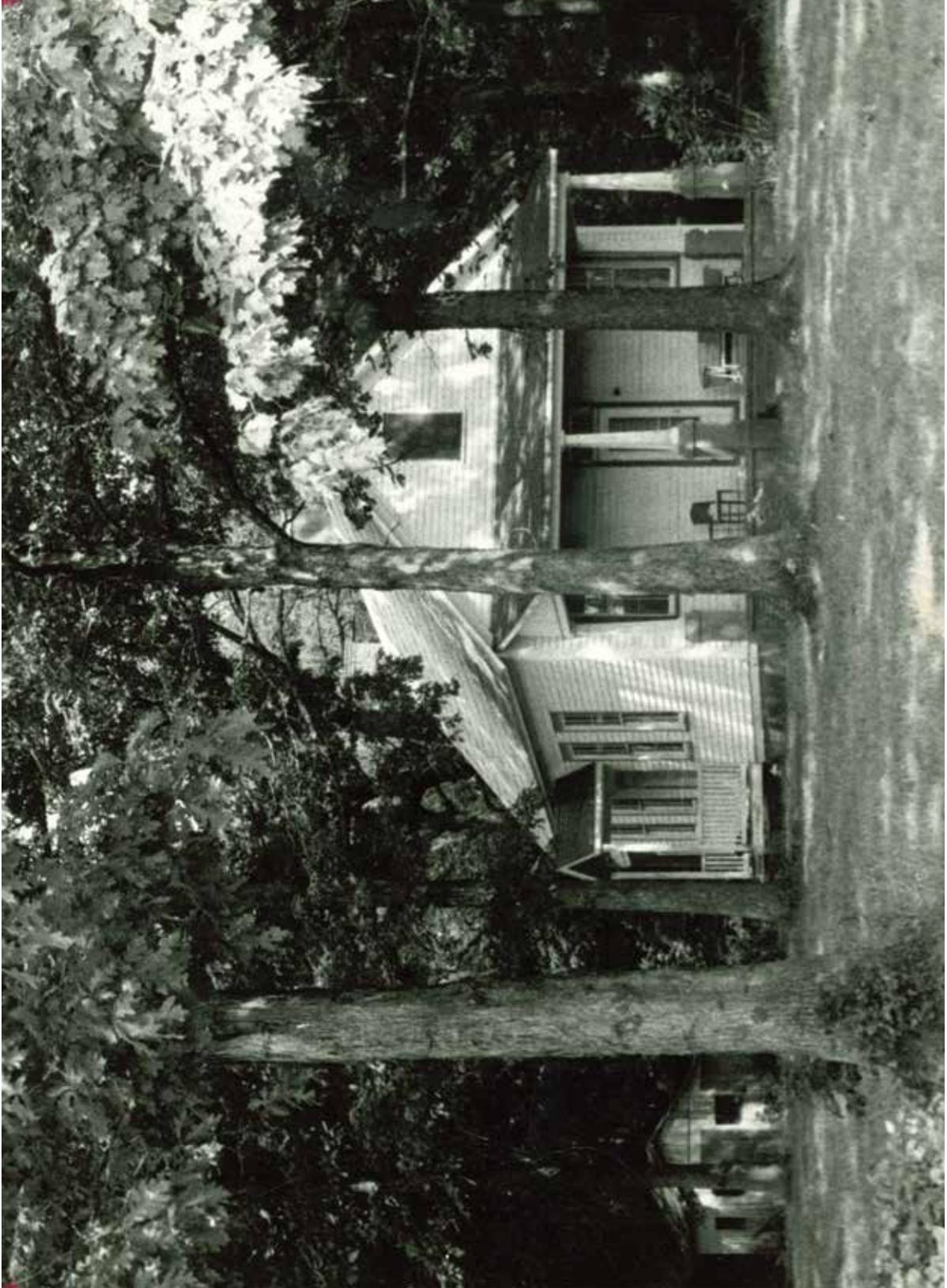
Herndon-Pender Road

Built on an acre owned by George Harrison, this one-room school had up to fifty students in first to seventh grades. Miss Lillian Millan taught there from 1921 to 1928, later teaching at Legato, Oakton and Jermantown schools. She had a stable built on the grounds of the school. Now a residence, it is located adjacent to the present Navy School.

Oakton  
c. 1897-1914

2390 Chain Bridge Road

This was the third schoolhouse in the community; an addition was built on the northeast end in 1907. Two early teachers were Richard Farr and Moss Love. The latter was killed in an aircraft training crash during the first World War.



Money's Corner School, Fox Mill Road and Reston Avenue, 1970, photographed by Kathryn S. Hogan.

Alterations were made to the building in 1946, but the blackboards are still in place behind the shelving. It is now a camping supply store, Appalachian Outfitters.

Old Ford

Route 7 at Idylwood Road

Sully Plantation

Sully Plantation

A log school from Antioch Farm, Prince William County, was moved onto the plantation grounds about 1962, having been brought to Fairfax County in 1929.

Sydenstricker

8511 Hooes Road

c. 1927-1939

(also known as Pohick School in Lee District)

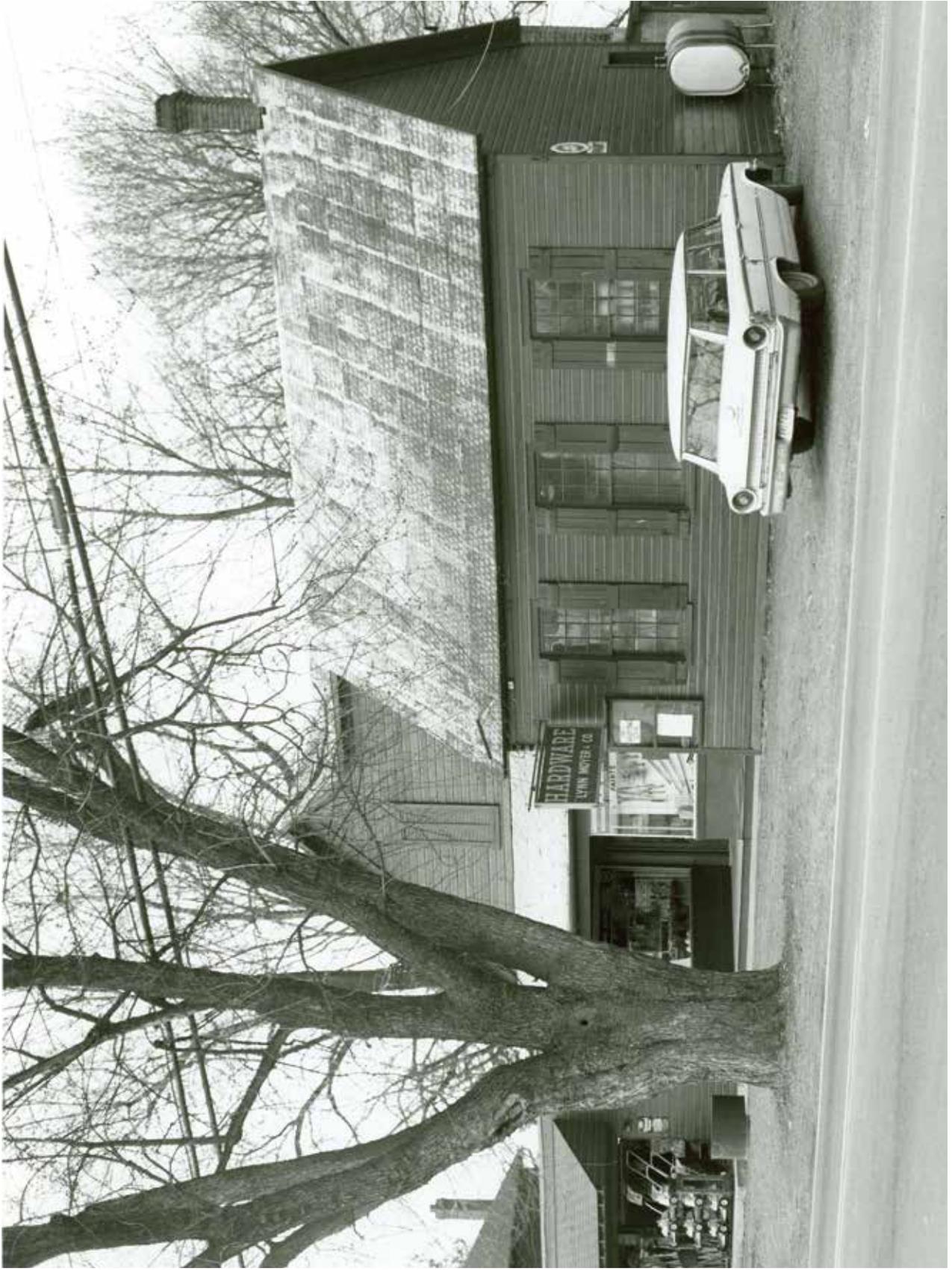
This school replaced an earlier building. It has been altered very little, although one window at the rear has been turned into a door. The building was sold in 1950 to the Upper Pohick Community League and is used as a meeting hall.

The school was named for Reverend Christopher Sydenstricker, first minister of the nearby Methodist Church, and uncle of author Pearl S. Buck. It is said to have been one of the last one-room schools to operate in Fairfax County. The school bell is still in place.

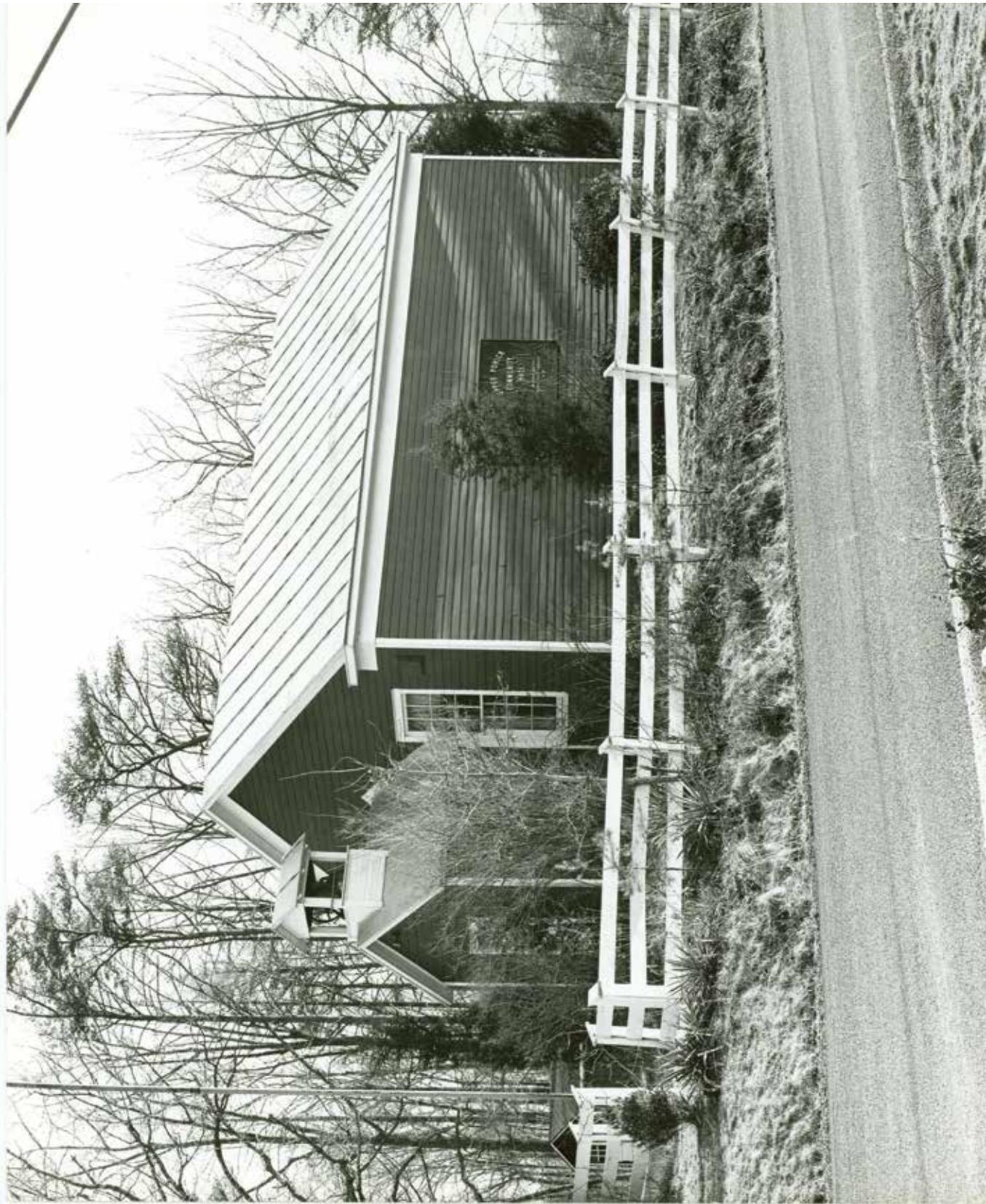
Vale

1888-1931

This two-room school had thirty-eight students and was built on a two-acre tract. It was later owned by the Vale Home Demonstration Club and was vacant in 1970.



Oakton School, built ca. 1897, enlarged 1907, 2390 Chain Bridge Road, now part of Appalachian Outfitters, as it appeared in 1968, photograph by Wm. Edmund Barrett.



Sydenstricker School, built ca. 1927, 8511 Hooses Road, photographed 1972 by Wm. Edmund Barrett.

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Working papers for this report may be found in the Virginiana Room of the Fairfax Central Library, 3915 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, 22030.

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