

HAMBURG HISTORY

A special section contributed by Mr. Daniel Barr on behalf of the Hamburg Historical Society



Hamburg School

Our school's history and the history of public education in Hamburg is such a great story that I will have to do it in two parts. This first part takes us back to 18th century.

Public education is believed to have been born out of the churches and Sunday schools. Back in the early days of our country, education was a privilege of the wealthy and was mainly taught in private schools, in the home with private tutors, family schools, and church affiliated schools.

We do know that some form of schooling existed in Hamburg as early as 1799. That's almost 50 years after Joseph Walling first settled in our town. Snell's History of Sussex & Warren Counties, published in 1881, reported a schoolhouse being built on the property our school sits on today. It is also believed that a schoolhouse sat on the grounds of what is now the Presbyterian Church. This was reported in Alanson Haines' Hardyston Memorial. He wrote that the school was a Quaker style building with two chimneys, one at each end of the school. At the time the land was owned by Joseph Sharp. Around 1800, this building was torn down and replaced with a smaller structure. Haines described the location of this school as near the iron railroad bridge.

A school on land owned by Gov. Daniel Haines was probably located near the Presbyterian Church as well. Gov. Haines purchased most of his land from the Sharp family in 1823, so the school may have already been there. In the early 19th century, Hamburg was the business center of Hardyston, and many of the families that lived here possessed a degree of affluence. With Gov. Haines being a large proponent of public education, Hamburg would soon benefit from his desire to see more public education in New Jersey.

In 1851, the newly formed Trustees of the Hamburg School met to incorporate and form a public school district in Hamburg. Hamburg at the time was part of the Township of Hardyston, and part of the township of Vernon. The first trustees were; Dr. Franklin Smith, Thomas D. Edsall, and Gov. Daniel Haines.

In 1880, the first part of the new school building was erected. This building would become known as "the white building". In 1894 an addition would be built. The building was 'T' shaped and can be seen today in the lobby of the middle school and in a painting and photograph in the main lobby. The students came from Hardyston Township, which included Hamburg and Franklin, and from Vernon. Students who lived far away came to school by horse drawn school buses. The buses were owned by Clark Bus Company which still is in business today. The school was white with green shutters. It had bay windows and a peaked roof. The wooden desks had to be screwed to the floor and each desk had a built in ink well. (I'm sure many a blond pigtail found its way into the ink). The building was located behind the old high school. It used oil lamps for light, had a playground surrounding the building, and had outhouses along Linwood Ave. The building was razed in 1963 to make room for the expanded school you know today.

Next Month – Hamburg gets a new high school!