

# HAMBURG HISTORY

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

## Hamburg School History (Part 3)

As we enter the 1950's, Hamburg School now has a grammar school, high school, and a gymnasium. Now we need a playground. Down the hill behind the gym was a large field. This field was acquired from the estates of Moses Piggery and the Chardavoyne family. The children of Moses Piggery, an African American farmer and veteran of the Civil War, sold their father's tract to the Hamburg School Board for \$350 in 1925. The remainder of the field was sold to the school board for \$1000 by Israel and Ann Chardavoyne. The total acquisition amounted to just under 10 acres. This land was used primarily as baseball fields until 1952, when the board acquired additional land from Henry Joustra.

In early 1952, a new club was formed to start community projects that would benefit our town and its children. The Hamburg Civic Club was headed by William Masker, a builder and developer, who was responsible for developing Orchard St. and Cloud Crest, (Summit and Circle Drive for those who no longer refer to that neighborhood as Cloud Crest). The club members included the former principal, Nick DeVita, and the Mayor, Leslie Vail, as well as future Mayor, Roger Harden.

The first project for the club was a new playground down near the ball fields. The playground consisted of: 2 swing sets, 2 slides, and a merry-go-round. The slides were made of shiny, polished metal. Those of us who were fortunate to use these slides will remember the feeling of the slides burning our skin during the hot days of June. In front of each swing set was a safety railing that was used more as a balance beam than a railing. Soon after a basketball court was added. The New Jersey Zinc Company, a large local employer located in Franklin, donated the swings, teeter-totters, and basketball court. To complete the project, water fountains were installed. The water was always warm, but it was wet and served its purpose. There is still a remnant of one fountain near the backstop and Moses Piggery historical marker next to Linwood Ave.

Also in 1952, the newly formed Hamburg School Band, led by music teacher John Williams, received their first uniforms. The band was accompanied by the baton twirling Hamburg School Majorettes.

Due to post-war growth, the decision was made to build a new high school. The school was constructed farther up the hill and attached to the gym. The high school ran from the end of the hallway where the middle school starts, down the hall, around the corner and stopped where the Kindergarten classroom is located. It was dedicated in 1958. Prior to this construction, the school was so crowded that for a few years, 5<sup>th</sup> grade was taught in the basement beneath the gym. The 1888 white school building was now used only for grammar school.

In 1962, Hamburg High School closed for good, transferring the remaining students to Franklin High School. The old white school house was torn down in 1963 to make room for further expansion in 1965 and again in 1970. The 1970 wing connected the grammar school to the old high school building.

In 2003 we dedicated the 6<sup>th</sup> expansion, and 7<sup>th</sup> building to Hamburg School, the middle school. To recap: 1888, the construction of the white building, 1912, High School building, 1938, the gym, 1958, the new high school, 1965, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade wing, 1970, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and music room wing, and 2003, the middle school.

School expansion is a reflection of municipal growth. It is a direct reflection of how desirable our town is to live and work in. Because of community leaders such as Haines, Linn, Edsall, Harden, Rude, Herriger, Marino, and countless others whose names are not recorded, but no less contributed, Hamburg has grown from a tract of farmland in the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, to an industrial leader at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to the bustling town we know today.



## HAMBURG PRIDE