

# School Houses in Worcester Township

1849-1915



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# The First Schools - Community Schools

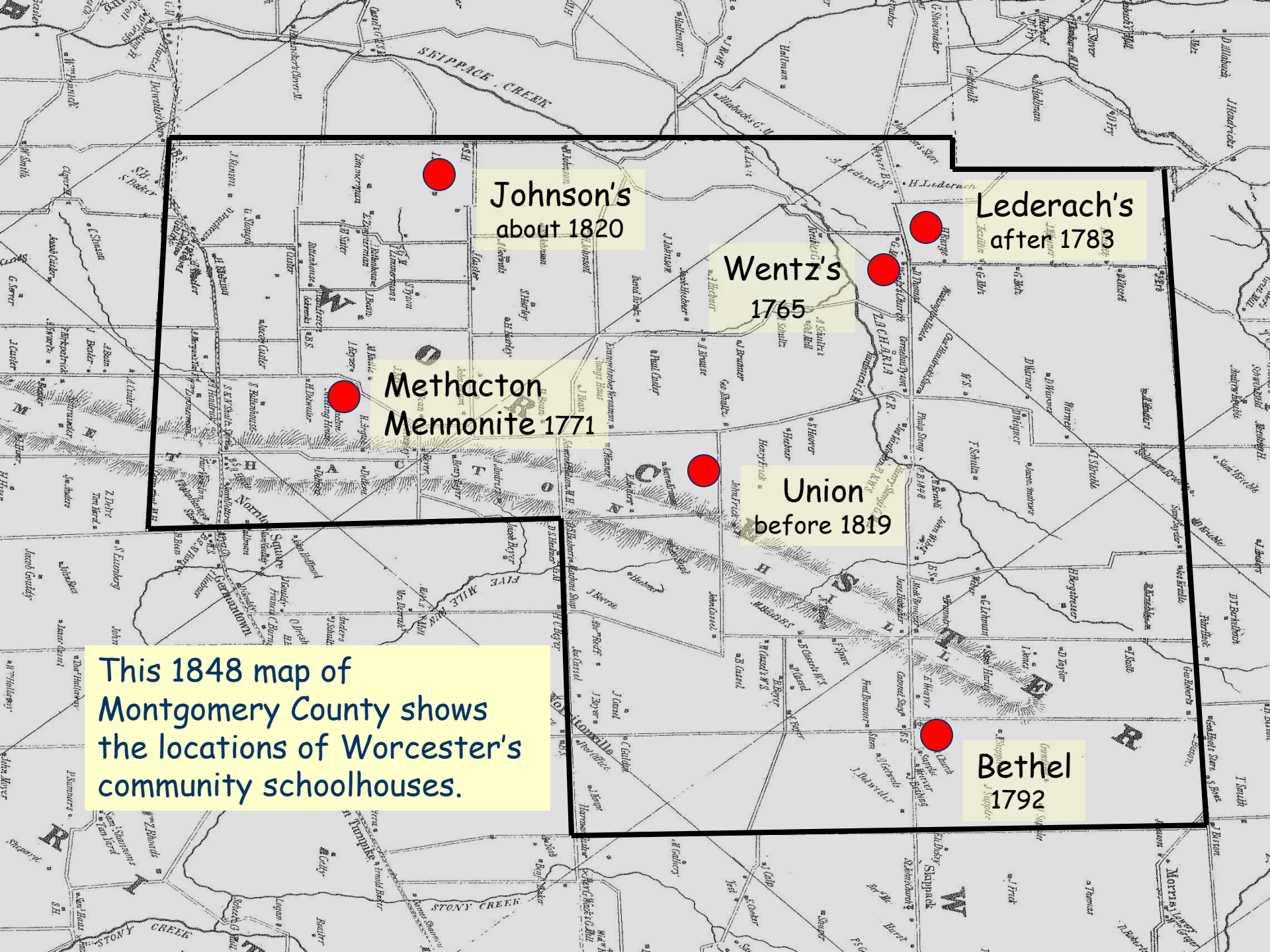
- The first school in Pennsylvania was built in Philadelphia in 1683.
- In keeping with William Penn's "Holy Experiment," nearly all schools were affiliated with a church community, to insure that their children were taught in accordance with the church's morals, principles and values.
- These were called "community" or "subscription" schools because they were funded on a per-pupil, per-day-of-attendance basis.
- School trustees were elected from their church communities to oversee the school.
- Subjects taught included spelling, reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, and geography. In one school, the girls were taught only reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. Additional instruction for the boys included surveying.
- Students had to supply their own books.



# Worcester Township Had Five Community Schools

- ❖ **Wentz's/Letherach's** (affiliated with Wentz's German Reformed Church)
  - ❖ Wentz's was started in 1765 and was located at Wentz Church on Skippack Pike.
  - ❖ When Wentz's School closed, circa 1793, it was replaced by Letherach's Seminary, located on Skippack Pike northwest of Wentz's Church.
- ❖ **Methacton Mennonite** (affiliated with Methacton Mennonite Church)
  - ❖ Started in 1771
  - ❖ Located at the intersection of Mill and Quarry Hall Roads
- ❖ **Bethel** (affiliated with Bethel Methodist-Episcopal Church)
  - ❖ Started in 1792
  - ❖ Located at the intersection of Bethel Road and Skippack Pike
- ❖ **Union** (also called **Frick's**) (affiliated with the Schwenkfelder and Reformed Mennonite congregations)
  - ❖ Started between 1816 and 1819
  - ❖ Located on Potshop Road between Landis & Trooper Roads
- ❖ **Johnson's** (also called **Green Hill**)
  - ❖ Started some time between 1782 and 1820
  - ❖ Located on Grange Avenue near Water Street Road





Johnson's  
about 1820

Lederach's  
after 1783

Wentz's  
1765

Methacton  
Mennonite 1771

Union  
before 1819

Bethel  
1792

This 1848 map of  
Montgomery County shows  
the locations of Worcester's  
community schoolhouses.

# Common Schools Act of 1834

- The community (church-run) schools did not always provide for the education of the poor.
- Despite hostility toward a "free school" system that would be supported by property taxes, the Common Schools Act was passed by the Pennsylvania legislature in 1834.
- Trustees from the church's communities were replaced by Directors for each school district.
- Some of the former Trustees continued to serve as the first Directors; others declined to serve in protest against the unpopular law.
- Worcester, Towamencin, and Skippack Townships sent a lobbyist to Harrisburg asking to have their schools exempted from the Act, without success.



# The Common Schools Act in Worcester

- Despite the Common School Act of 1834, education in Worcester for the next 15 years continued to be provided by the five community schools that had existed for years:

Bethel

Johnson's/Green Hill

Letherach's Seminary

Methacton Mennonite

Union/Frick's

- In 1848, the Pennsylvania legislature made schooling compulsory, beginning the next year.
- Two new schools were necessary to bring the township's complement to the required seven, as determined by the number of pupils at the time.
- The Directors began to evaluate the existing schools to determine whether they could be acquired to serve the public school system. They also devised a long-term program of building and repair.

# The Transition from Community Schools to Common Schools

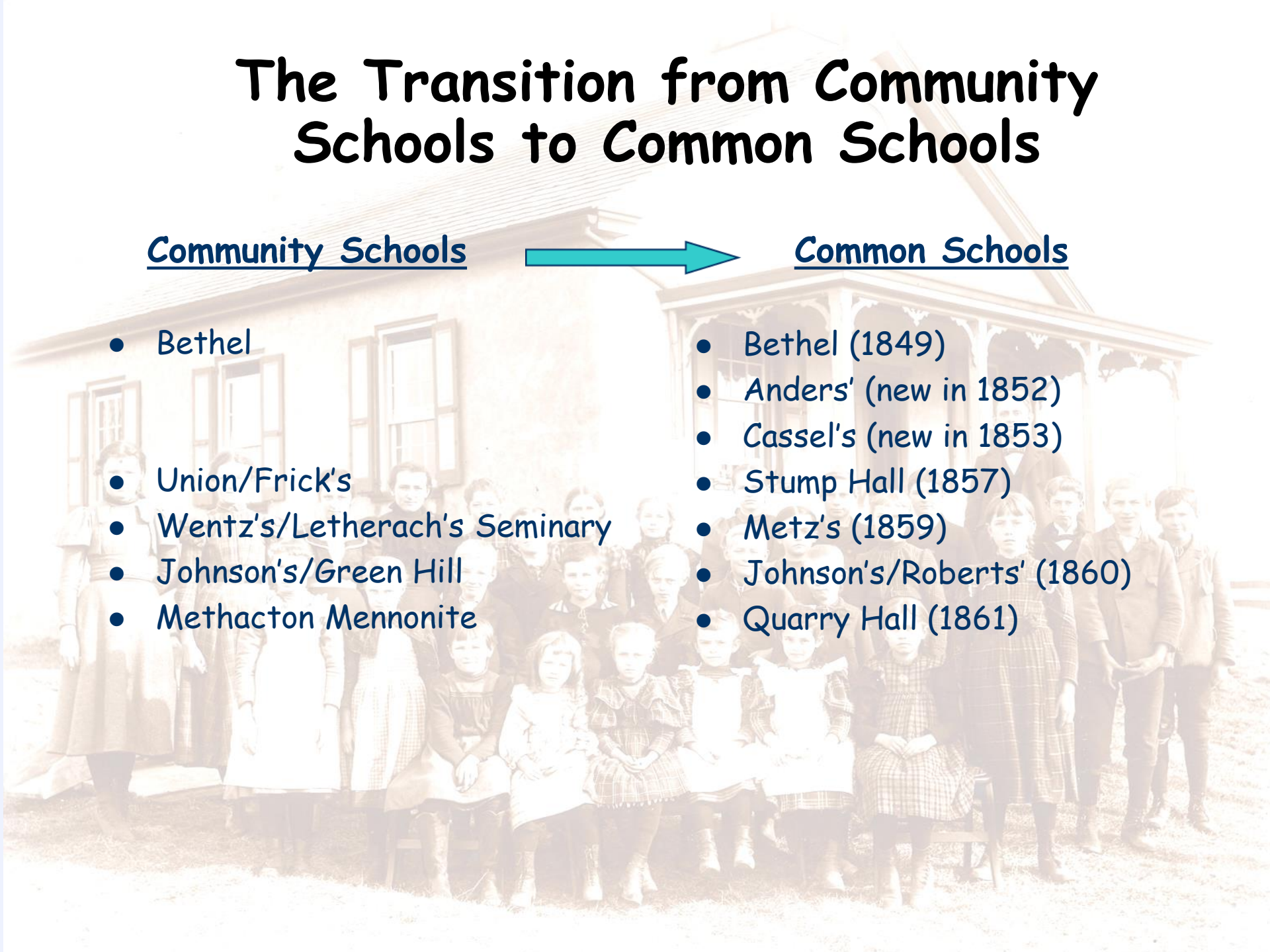
## Community Schools



## Common Schools

- Bethel
- Union/Frick's
- Wentz's/Letherach's Seminary
- Johnson's/Green Hill
- Methacton Mennonite

- Bethel (1849)
- Anders' (new in 1852)
- Cassel's (new in 1853)
- Stump Hall (1857)
- Metz's (1859)
- Johnson's/Roberts' (1860)
- Quarry Hall (1861)





# Common (Public) School Buildings

- George M. Weber, a teacher and school director, remarked that "the first school houses that were built were not better than some of [the] citizens' farm buildings used for live stock."
- Each of the five community schools was replaced on the original foundations at least once, due to structural "disrepair." Dates on the school district map give the original date of the school and that of the date stone or the last replacement.
- All school buildings were 30' X 40' and were built in basically the same fashion.
- The buildings were plastered stone, which was not meant to be exposed. Each school had a central door, three windows on either side, a chimney at the rear, and a porch.
- Subtle differences distinguish each schoolhouse, such as the number of window panes, the number of raised panels in the plank shutters, the scroll detail on the porch roof or the molding on the porch posts. Sometimes the combination of these details helps to identify a particular school in undocumented photographs.

# Inside a One-Room Schoolhouse

## Water Street Schoolhouse, built 1860

"The desks were in one long row all around the schoolroom, against the wall, with a long bench to fit each desk. There was a little entry before we came into the schoolroom."

Excerpt from "The Old and the New Schoolhouse,"  
by Eleanore C. Hunsicker, from *The Custer Family*

## Specifications for Metz Schoolhouse, built 1859

- The Room to contain four tiers of desks, each desk four feet long
- Six desks in one tier, besides one on each end of the platform
- A Substantial bench to each desk, with benches to Seat the Smaller Scholars on each Side of the Teacher's Seat
- One good and convenient desk and Seat for the Teacher
- A Small vestibule inside the door with Sufficient Shelving to accommodate the Scholars

From the Agreement Between Garrett Metz and the Board of School Directors of Worcester Township for building a School House (1859)



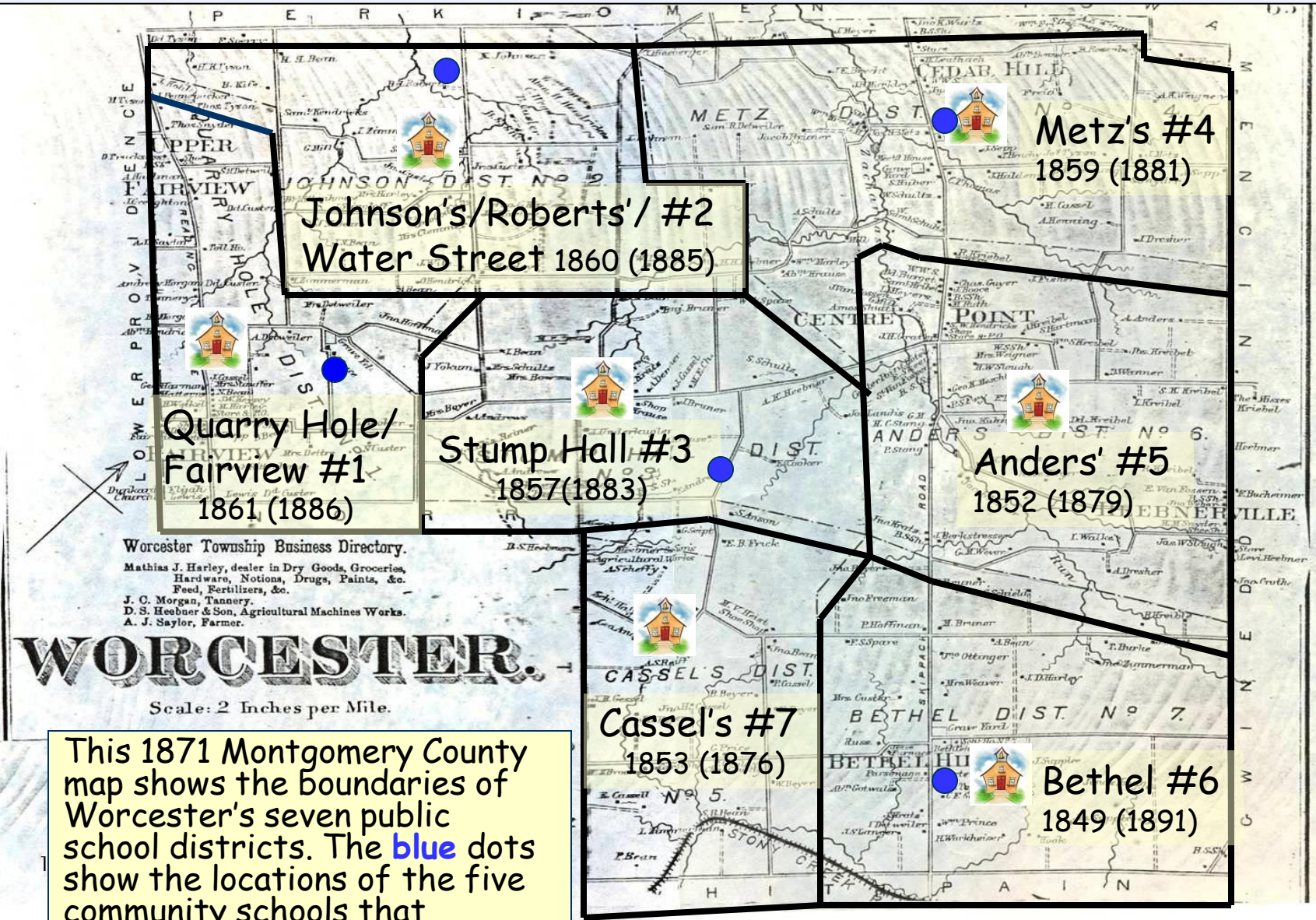
# Interior of a one-room schoolhouse, ca. 1870



Photo courtesy of Charles B. Aycock Birthplace, Wayne County, NC



# Worcester's Seven School Districts



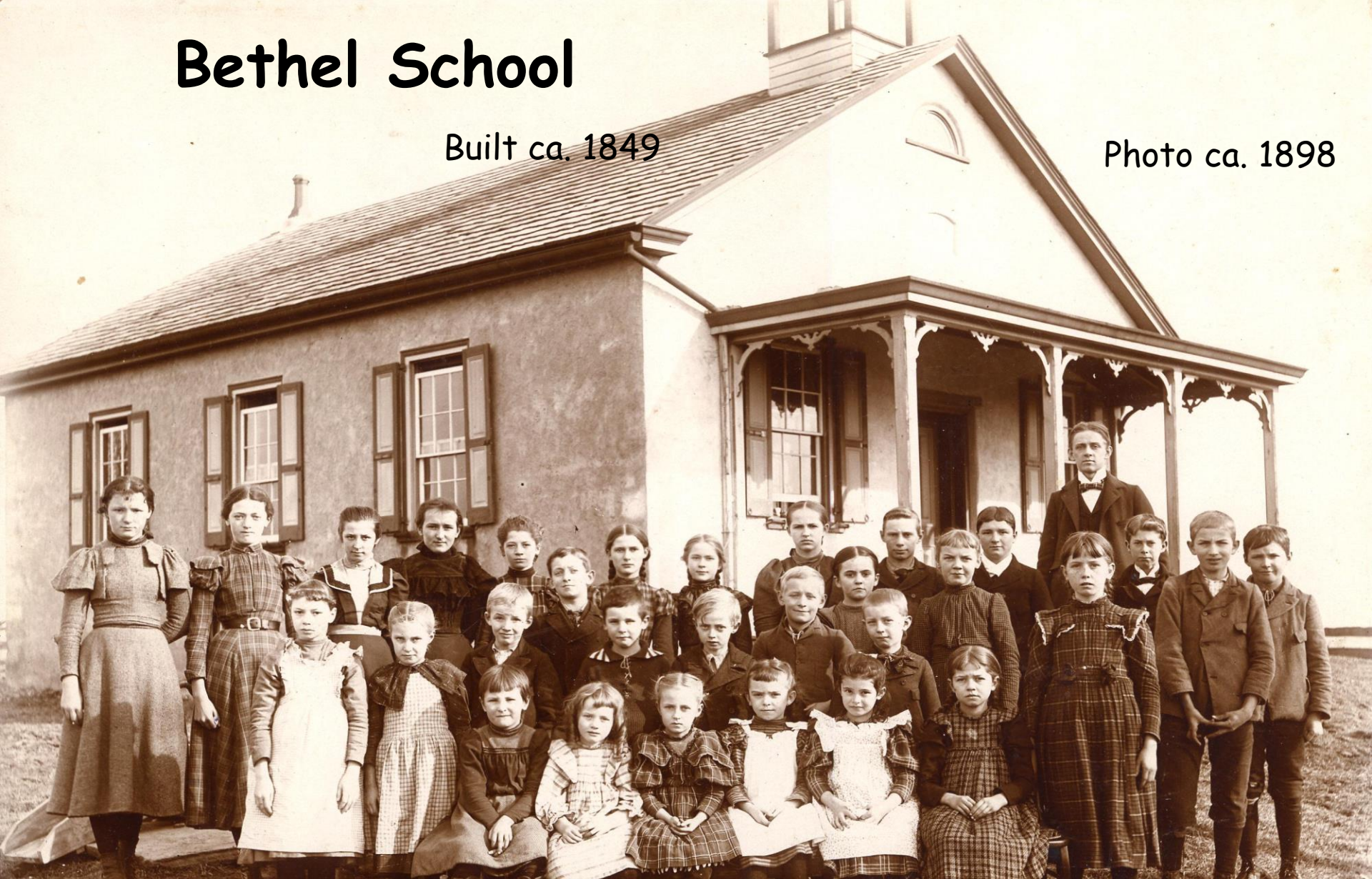
This 1871 Montgomery County map shows the boundaries of Worcester's seven public school districts. The blue dots show the locations of the five community schools that preceded the common schools.



# Bethel School

Built ca. 1849

Photo ca. 1898

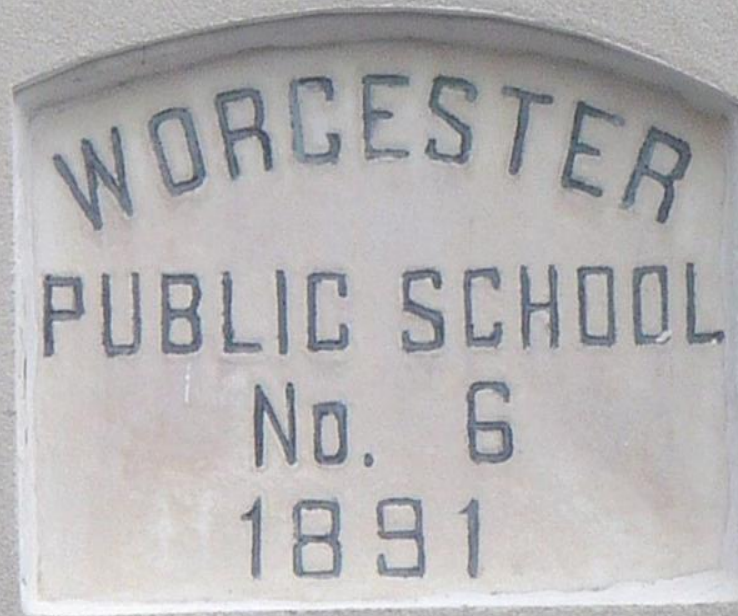


Bethel Church was originally a Methodist Episcopal denomination. The sale of the original property from David Wagner to the church trustees included a notation that a school house be built adjoining the Meeting House.



# Bethel School

- The date stone is from the most recent school built on this site, in 1891.



## Details of Bethel School building:

- Six pane over six pane (6/6) windows
- Two raised panels in the plank shutters
- Scroll work on porch





**Bethel School is the only school building with the teacher's platform still in place**



# Sale of Bethel School



The building was sold for \$400 to the Bethel Church Trustees. It is presently used as a church office and education building.



# Anders' School

built 1852



Photo: between 1852 and 1879

After the Common School Act of 1834, a new school was built on Shearer Road. Property was purchased on March 3, 1852, from Philip W. and Margaret Stong for \$60.

Sources state that the school was called Anders "after an unknown family of Anders." It is more likely that this school was named after one of the School Directors.



# Anders' School

Rebuilt 1879



The Anders' School has:

- Six pane over nine pane (6/9) windows
- Three raised panels in the plank shutters (uneven)
- Scrollwork and molding on porch posts
- A brick chimney instead of a flue for the stove



# Sale of Anders' School



Bidding started at \$300. The building and three fourths of an acre of land were sold for \$500 to James Shiery.



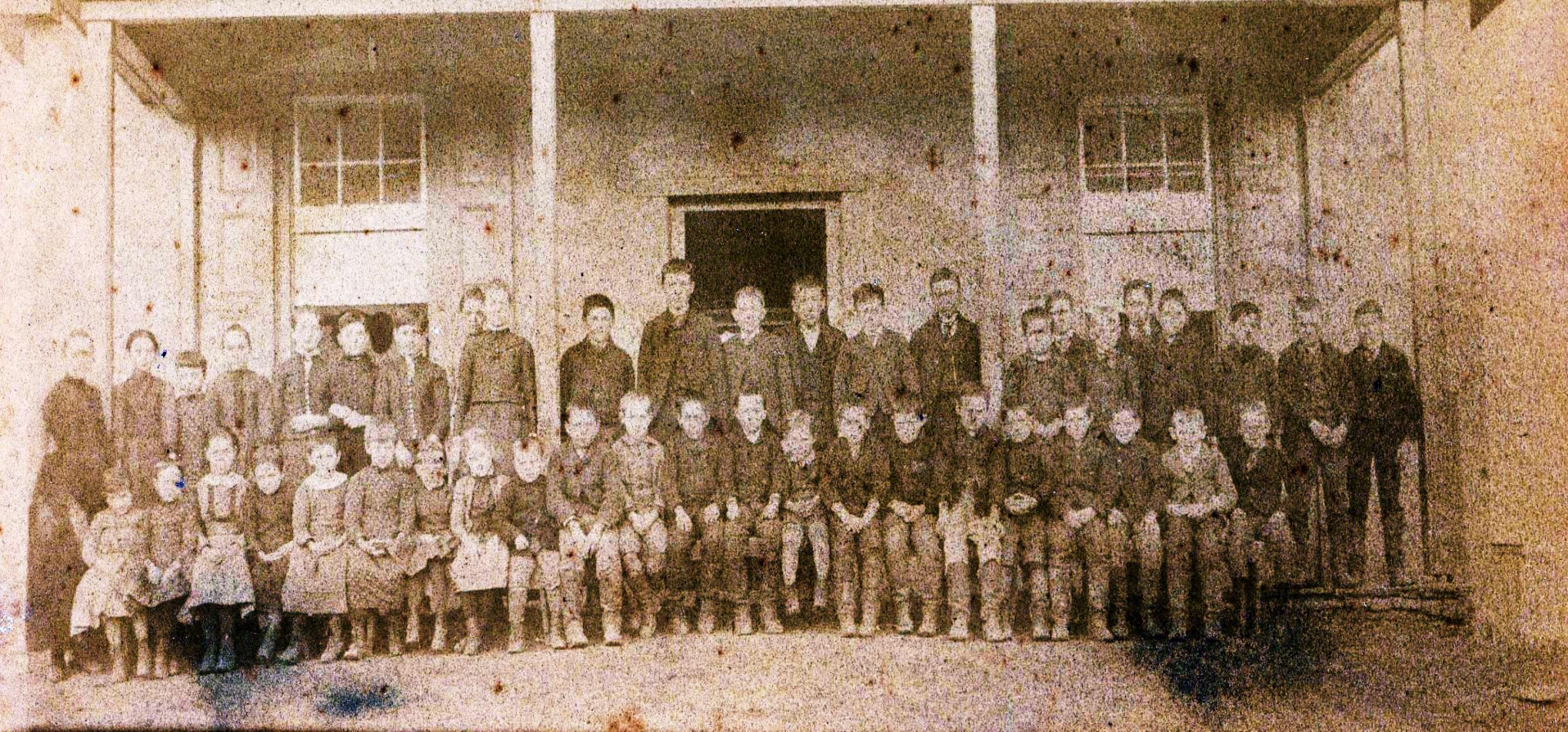
# Cassel's School

\_ Built 1853

Photo after 1876

Cassel's school was built on Potshop Road between Berks and Township Line Roads.

Property was purchased on July 11, 1853, from Benjamin and Catherine Cassel for \$50.



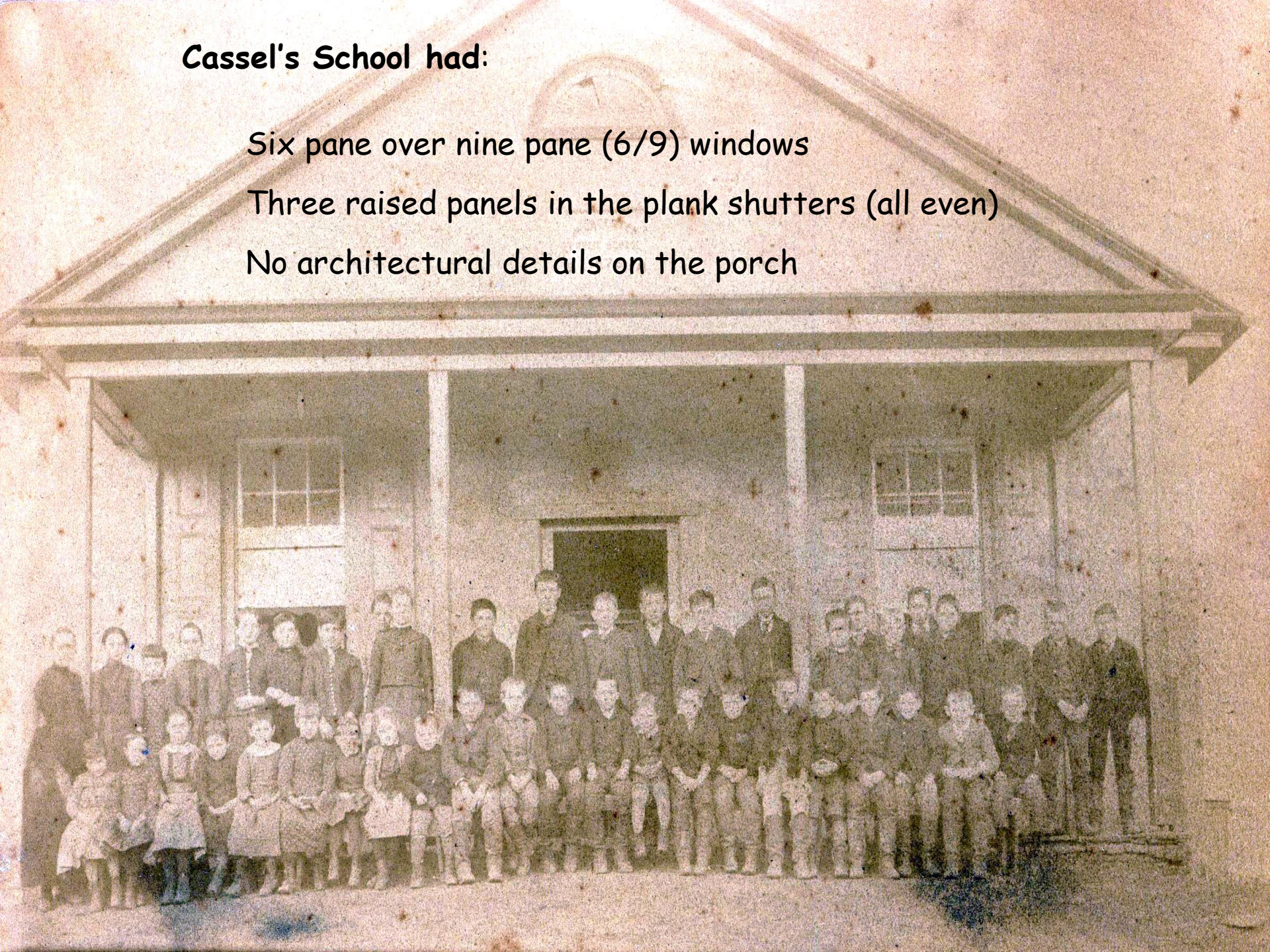


**Cassel's School had:**

Six pane over nine pane (6/9) windows

Three raised panels in the plank shutters (all even)

No architectural details on the porch





A photograph of a white, single-story house with a brown gabled roof. The house features blue trim around the windows and a central wooden door with a small arched window. The porch is supported by blue columns. The house is partially covered in green ivy, particularly on the left and right sides. A white picket fence is in the foreground. The text "Sale of Cassel's School" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# **Sale of Cassel's School**

**Bidding started at \$100. The building and half an acre of land were sold to Isaac Beyer for \$400.**



# Union/Frick's School

Built before 1819

- It was called the Union School because it was a “union” of the Schwenkfelder Church community near Trooper and Township Line Roads and the Reformed Mennonite Church community on Berks Road.
- It is likely that the school stood near Potshop Road, on property now owned by the Variety Club.
- Two Frick farms, belonging to Henry and John Frick, were on the opposite side of Potshop Road from the school. The Frick name was likely used to describe the school's location in the township.



# Stump Hole/Hall School

- This school replaced the Union School on Krause Avenue/Potshop Road.
- Property was purchased on August 8, 1856, from Henry and Elizabeth Kratz for \$75.
- There are two versions of the story of naming this school. One recalls a chestnut tree stump in the road before Valley Forge Road was straightened; the other places an oak tree stump near the porch: "many a sport was found in maintaining possession of the stump." (Heebner)
- It was later felt by the community that "Hole" was "unrefined," and the name was changed to "Hall."
- The school was called "Beans" for the first year only.



# Stump Hall School

Photo: after 1907

Built ca. 1883

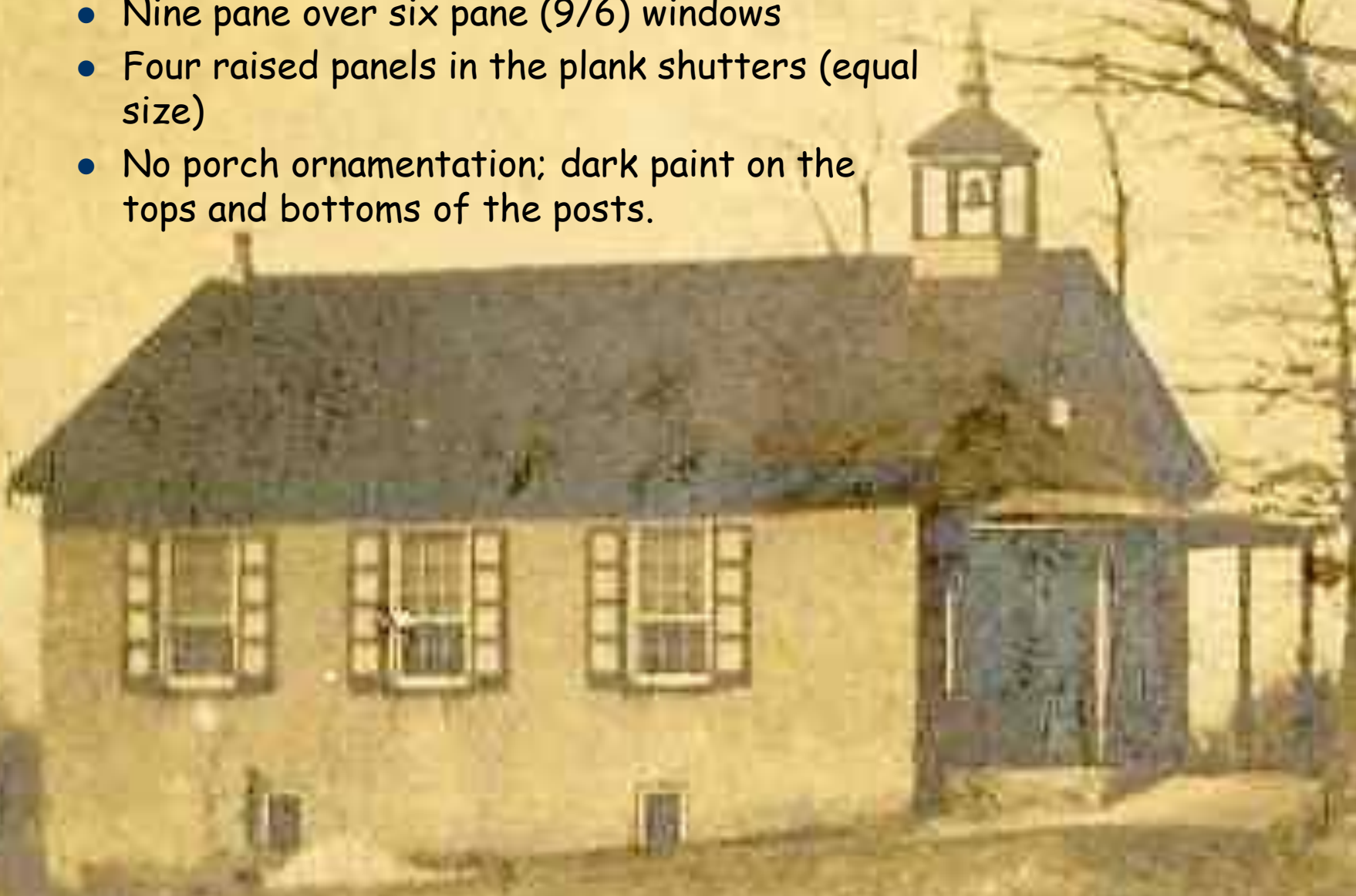
This photo of the Stump Hall school also shows:

- ❖ The white oak tree near the porch, one of Worcester's "ancient trees," which still has embedded in its trunk the chain and ring used by the schoolmaster to tie his horse.
- ❖ The trolley track and waiting station (on the right). The trolley was in operation from 1907 to 1923.



## Stump Hall School has:

- Nine pane over six pane (9/6) windows
- Four raised panels in the plank shutters (equal size)
- No porch ornamentation; dark paint on the tops and bottoms of the posts.





# Sale of Stump Hall School



Bidding started at \$200. The building and half an acre of land sold for \$620 to Isaiah S. Anders.



# Wentz's School

1765



This is the sexton's house in front of Wentz's Church, on Skippack Pike. The living room of this house (outlined in red) was the original community school.



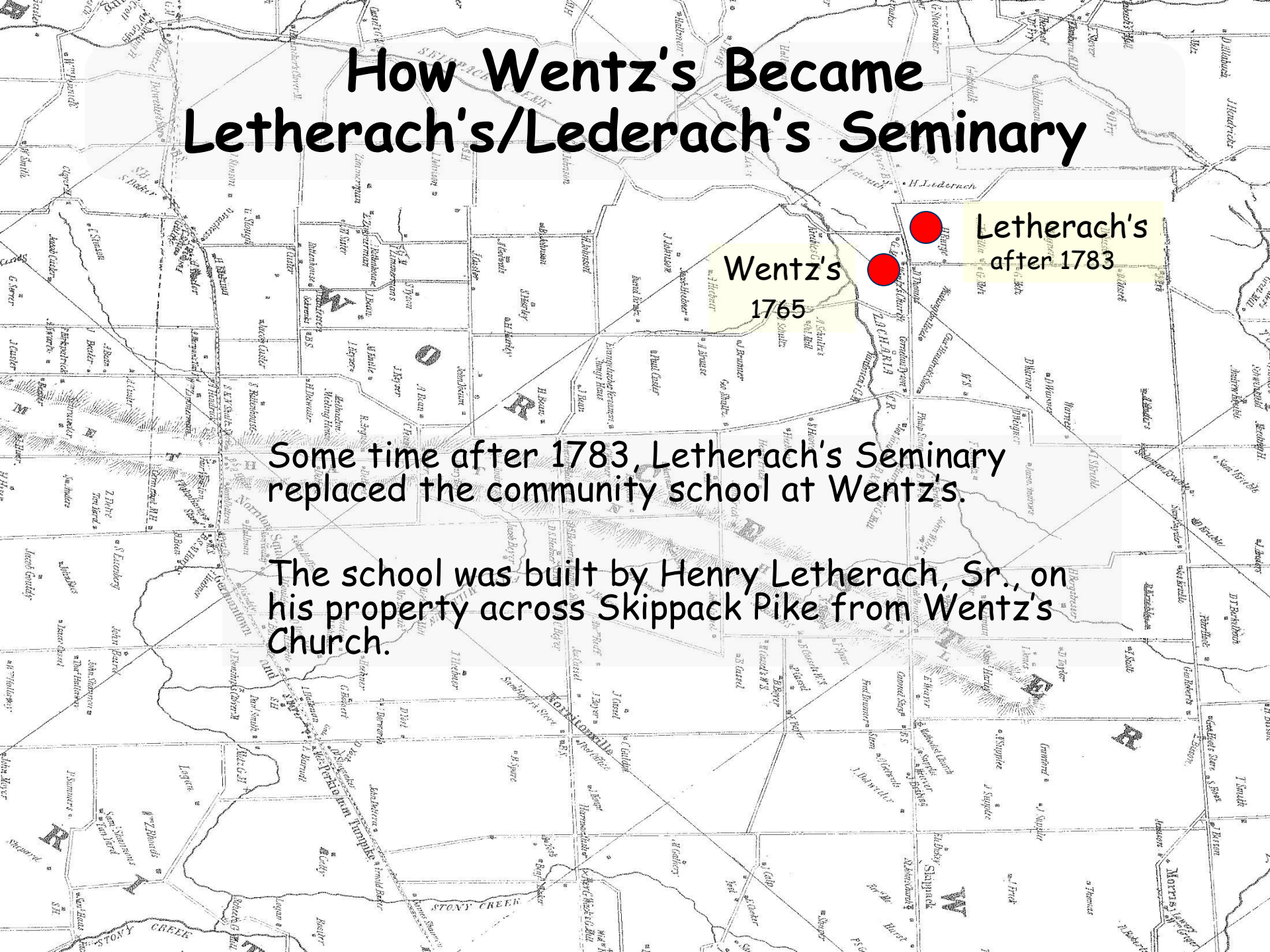
# How Wentz's Became Letherach's/Lederach's Seminary

Wentz's  
1765

Letherach's  
after 1783

Some time after 1783, Letherach's Seminary replaced the community school at Wentz's.

The school was built by Henry Letherach, Sr., on his property across Skippack Pike from Wentz's Church.





# How Letherach's Seminary Became Metz's

- Henry Letherach, Sr., provided land for a community school in 1841, with the stipulation that it never be used for a common (public) school or "singing school."
- In 1859, when Worcester was finally in the process of implementing the common school system, this restriction was overcome by having Garret Metz, then a school Director, purchase the schoolhouse and then sell it back to the school district, minus the restriction.
- The Directors justified the sale and repurchase by declaring that the school property was too small for a common school. Garrett Metz sold the district a larger parcel of land to address this need.
- The school was called Letherach's Seminary until this land swap occurred in 1859.
- One story claims that a John Metz was in charge of the construction of the new building and that "he was honored by naming the school for him."



# Metz's School

Built ca. 1859

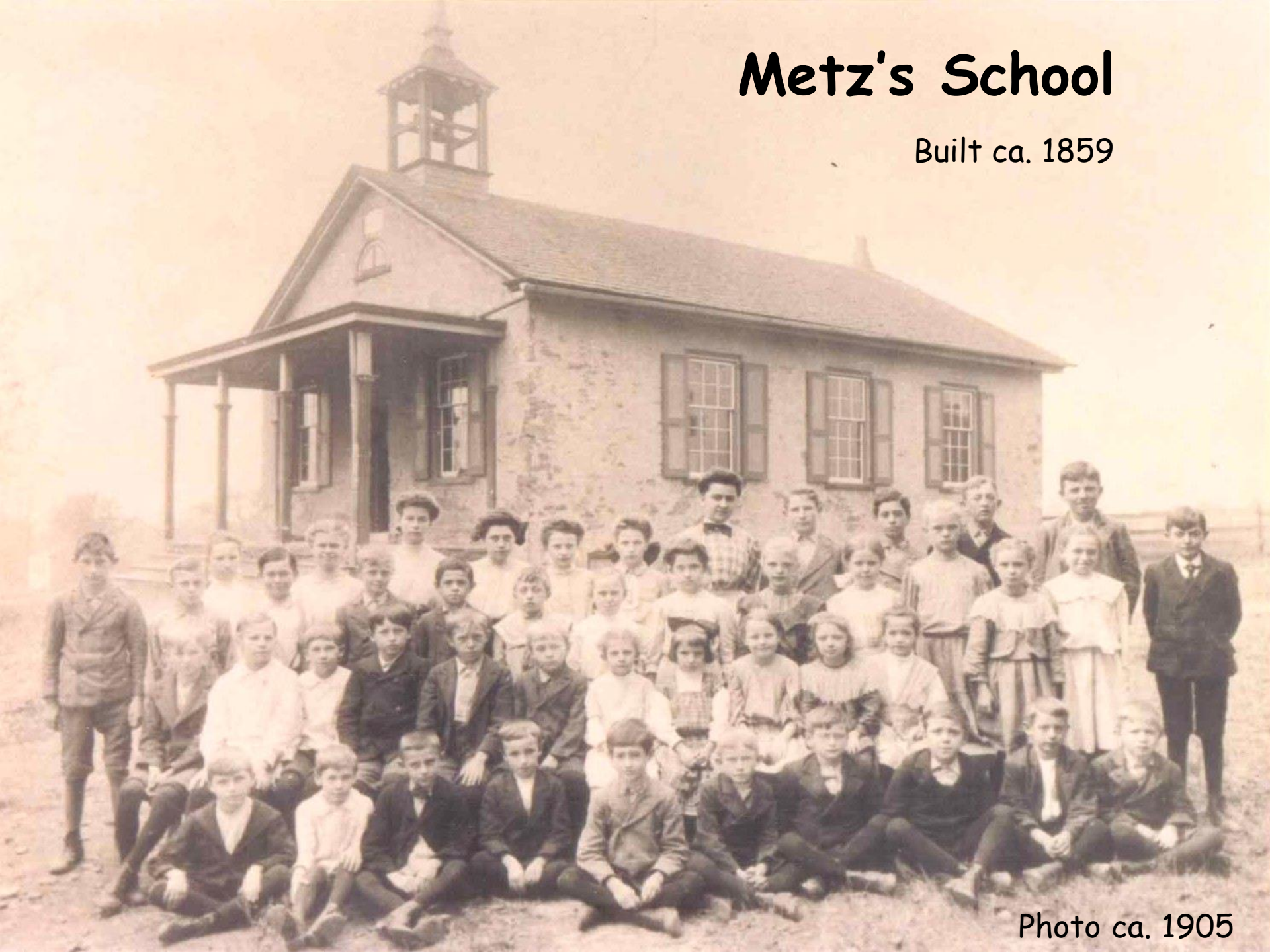


Photo ca. 1905



# Metz's School



Metz's School has:

- Six pane over nine pane (6/9) windows
- Two raised panels in the plank shutters (one large, one small)
- Molding on the porch posts
- Datestone ABOVE the fanlight window (the only Worcester schoolhouse with this design)





## Sale of Metz's School

Bidding started at \$300. The building on three-fourths of an acre sold for \$580 to Horace M. Geyer.



# Johnson's/Green Hill School

## Johnson's or Green Hill School Built before 1820

- The school house was already on the property when William Johnson purchased the land in 1820.
- It was referred to as "Green Hill School" due to its location in the area of the township known as Green Hill.
- In 1860, the school was razed and replaced with Isaac Johnson's Water Street School.

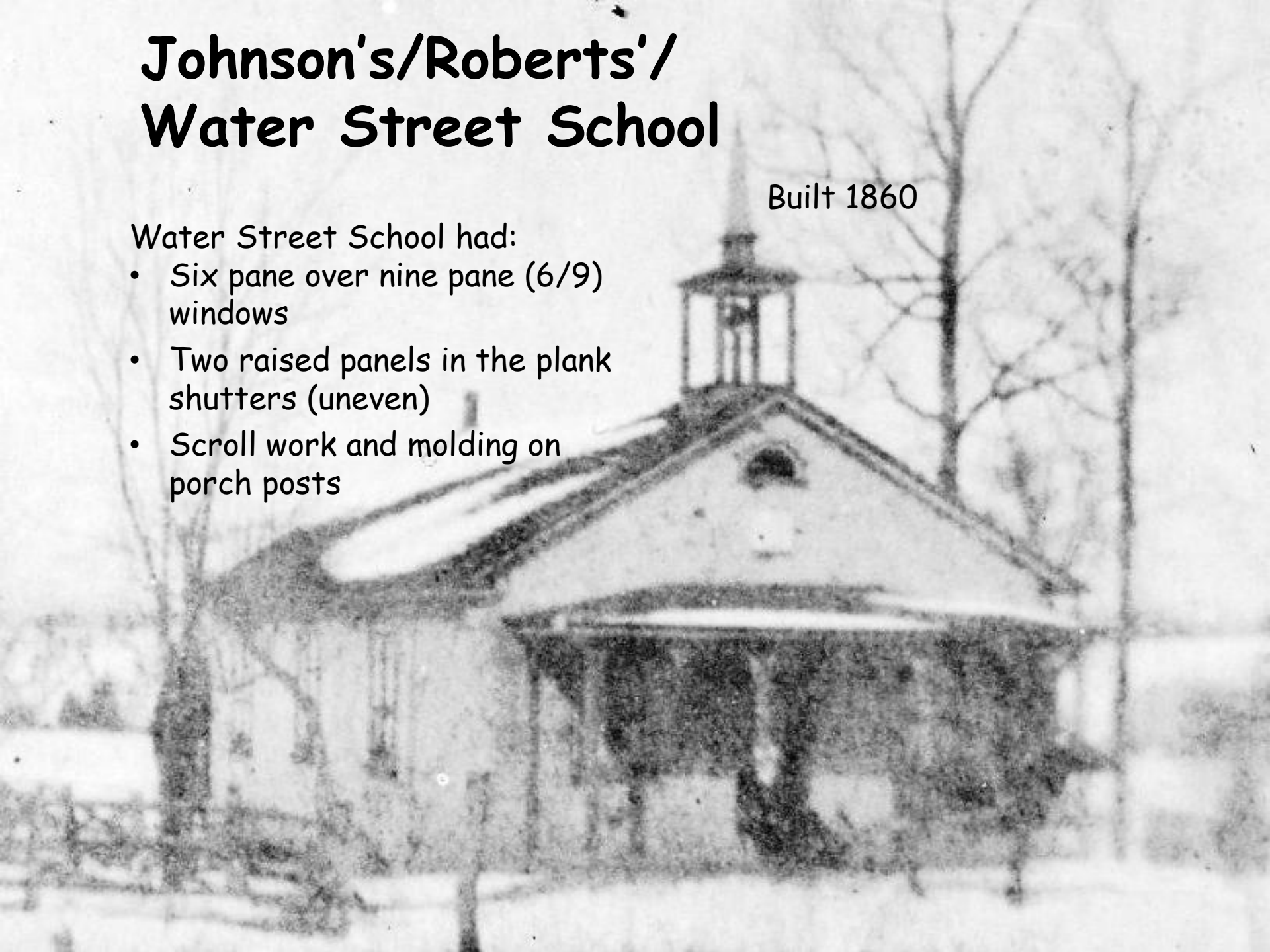


# Johnson's/Roberts'/ Water Street School

Built 1860

Water Street School had:

- Six pane over nine pane (6/9) windows
- Two raised panels in the plank shutters (uneven)
- Scroll work and molding on porch posts





# The Naming of “Water Street Schoolhouse”

by Ellie Custer

*“I was one of the first to be there when school opened and another early one was a neighbor boy who lived just across the meadow from my father’s farm, Elhanan Gotswalt [Gotwals]. Well, we surveyed that schoolroom to quite an extent and we thought it one of the finest we ever saw, especially when we compared it to the old one. Then we looked outside and saw the little creek running right by the ground of the schoolhouse and Elhanan and I decided it should be called “Water Street Schoolhouse.”*

*“By that time some more of the scholars had come, all this was talked over and each thought it a novel idea to call it Water Street. It was not long before the new building became universally known as the Water Street Schoolhouse and the original name was seldom used except in business.”*

‘The Old and the New Schoolhouse,’ from *The Custer Family*  
by Eleanore C. Hunsicker



# Sale of Water Street School



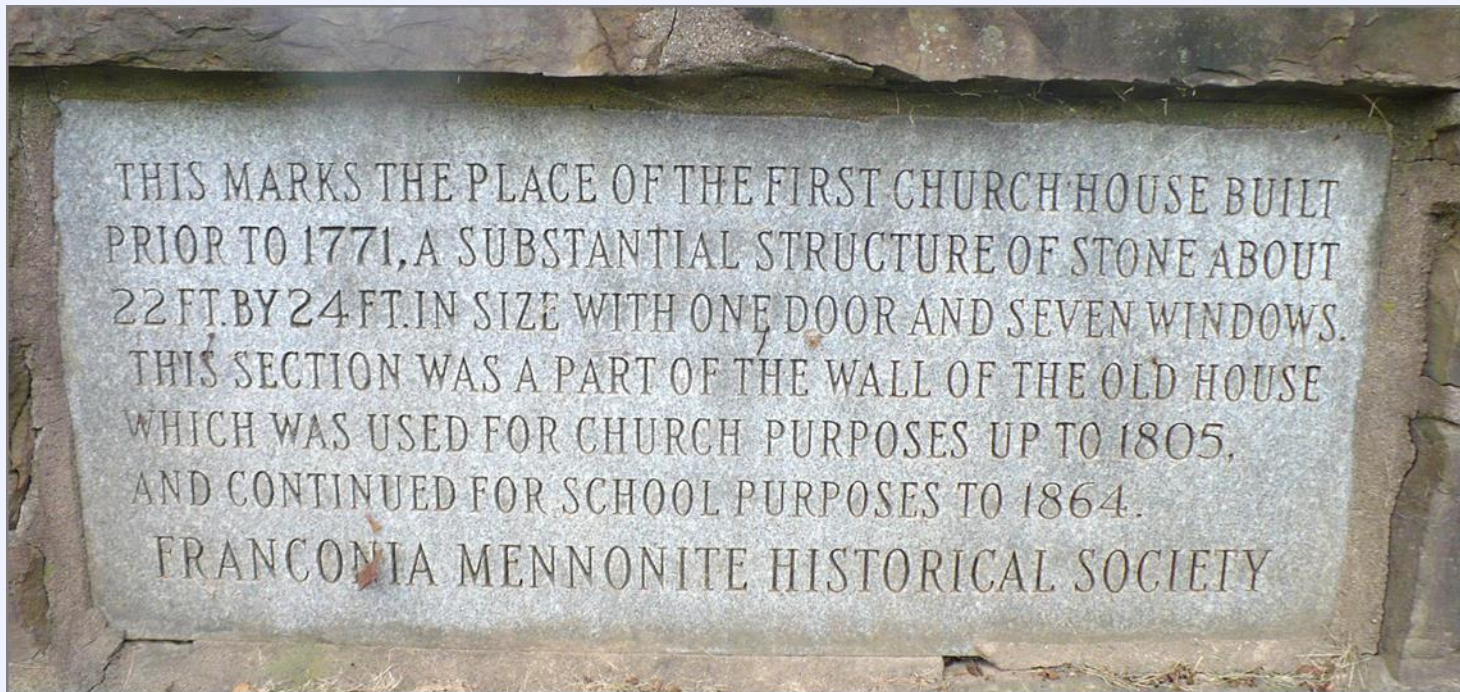
The building and 128 perches of land were sold for \$220 to Andrew S. Denner. It burned in 1968 and has been renovated and restored.



# Methacton/Quarry Hole/Fairview

## Methacton Mennonite Community School

**Built before 1771**



This historical marker at Methacton Mennonite Church indicates the location of the first community school in Worcester, built prior to 1771.

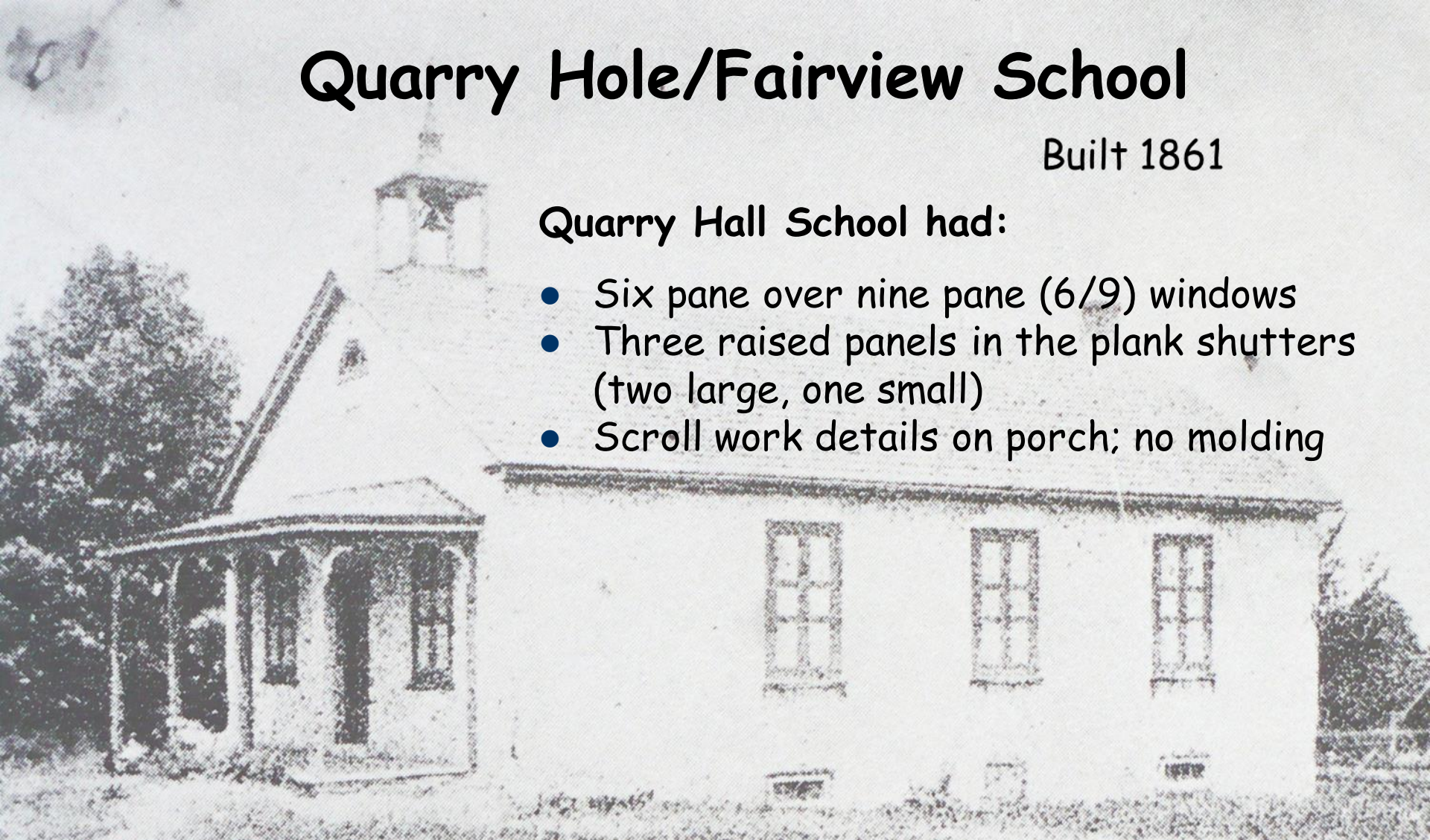


# Quarry Hole/Fairview School

Built 1861

## Quarry Hall School had:

- Six pane over nine pane (6/9) windows
- Three raised panels in the plank shutters (two large, one small)
- Scroll work details on porch; no molding



- The school was so named because there was a quarry nearby. The name was later changed to Quarry Hall and then to Fairview.
- On Sunday night, January 12, 1896, the school burned to the ground. School was held on the second floor of the Fairview Creamery until a new school was built.



# Early Teacher's Desk



The desk is now over 100 years old and is on exhibit in the Worcester Historical Society's Museum in Farmers' Union Hall.

Ernest Heebner, a lifelong resident of Worcester Township and a teacher, administrator, and finally superintendent of schools, found this desk in the basement of the burned-out Quarry Hall school. It was in deplorable condition, one leg broken off and needing repairs. He took it to Mr. Buck, a refinisher of antiques in Skippack, to have the leg replaced and the whole desk refinished.

He then put it in his office in the Worcester School when he was named principal in 1925. On June 26, 1984, the School Board of Directors of the Methacton School District donated this desk to the Worcester Historical Society.



# Fairview School



Photo ca. 1900

The new school built after the fire in 1896 was a different design than the other schoolhouses and received some criticism for that reason. It was at this time that the name of the school was changed to Fairview.



# Sale of Fairview School



The school was closed in 1946, and pupils attended school in Center Point.

"The Fairview Village school property located on Church [Quarry Hall] Road consisting of three acres of nicely located ground with a one and half story brick building was sold at Public sale on Monday evening by W. Earl Markley to W. A. Thomas, a retired machinist, of Philadelphia, for \$8,800. Mr. Thomas will make extensive improvements to the property and will reside there." *The Montgomery Transcript*, 14 Aug 1947

In 1971, the school was purchased by Grace Baptist Church.



# Cooperation with Neighboring Townships

- Johnson's School

In 1849, Skippack's school directors paid \$25 toward the cost of the teacher at Johnson's School, indicating that some Skippack students attended school there.

- Laurel Hill School

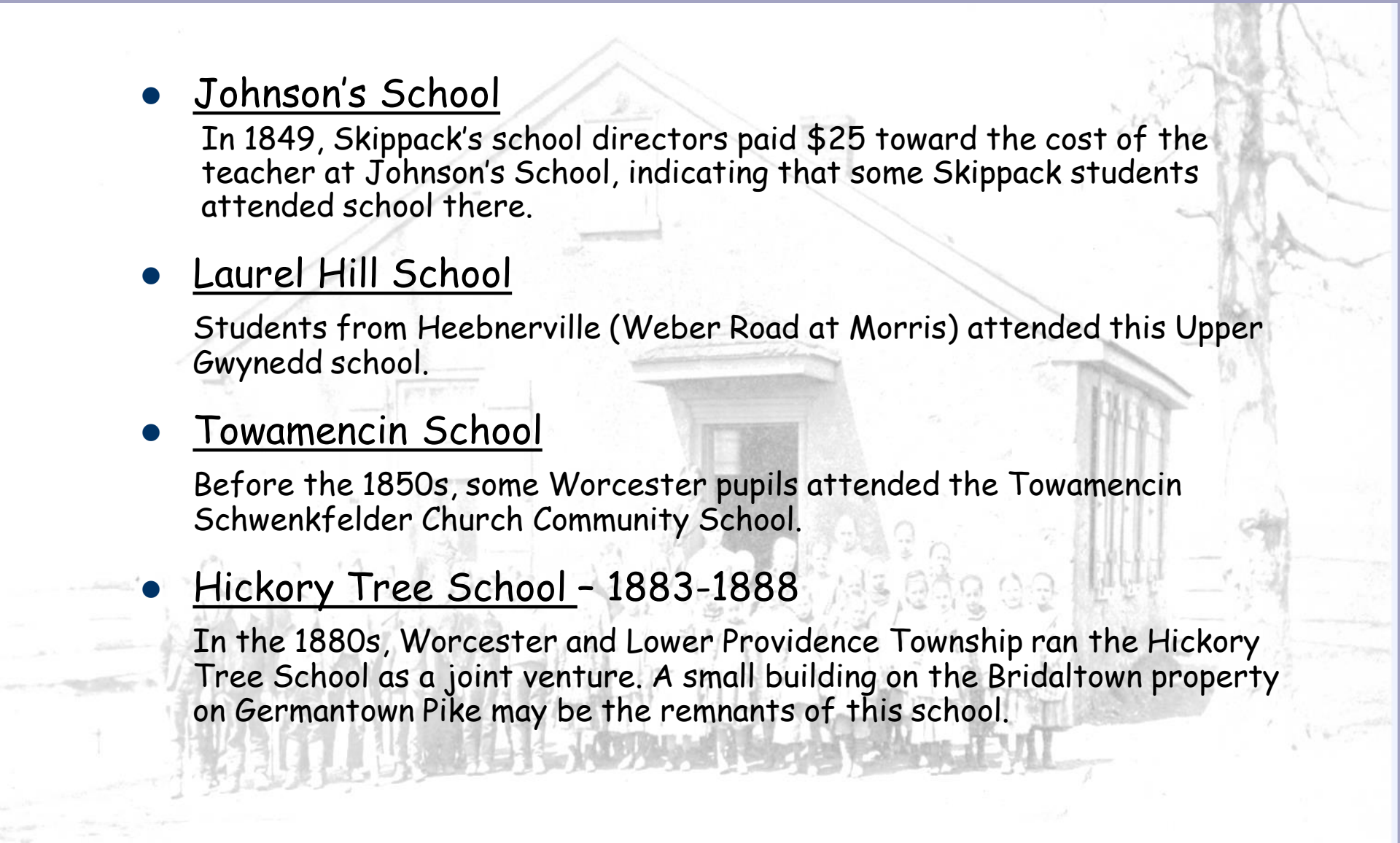
Students from Heebnerville (Weber Road at Morris) attended this Upper Gwynedd school.

- Towamencin School

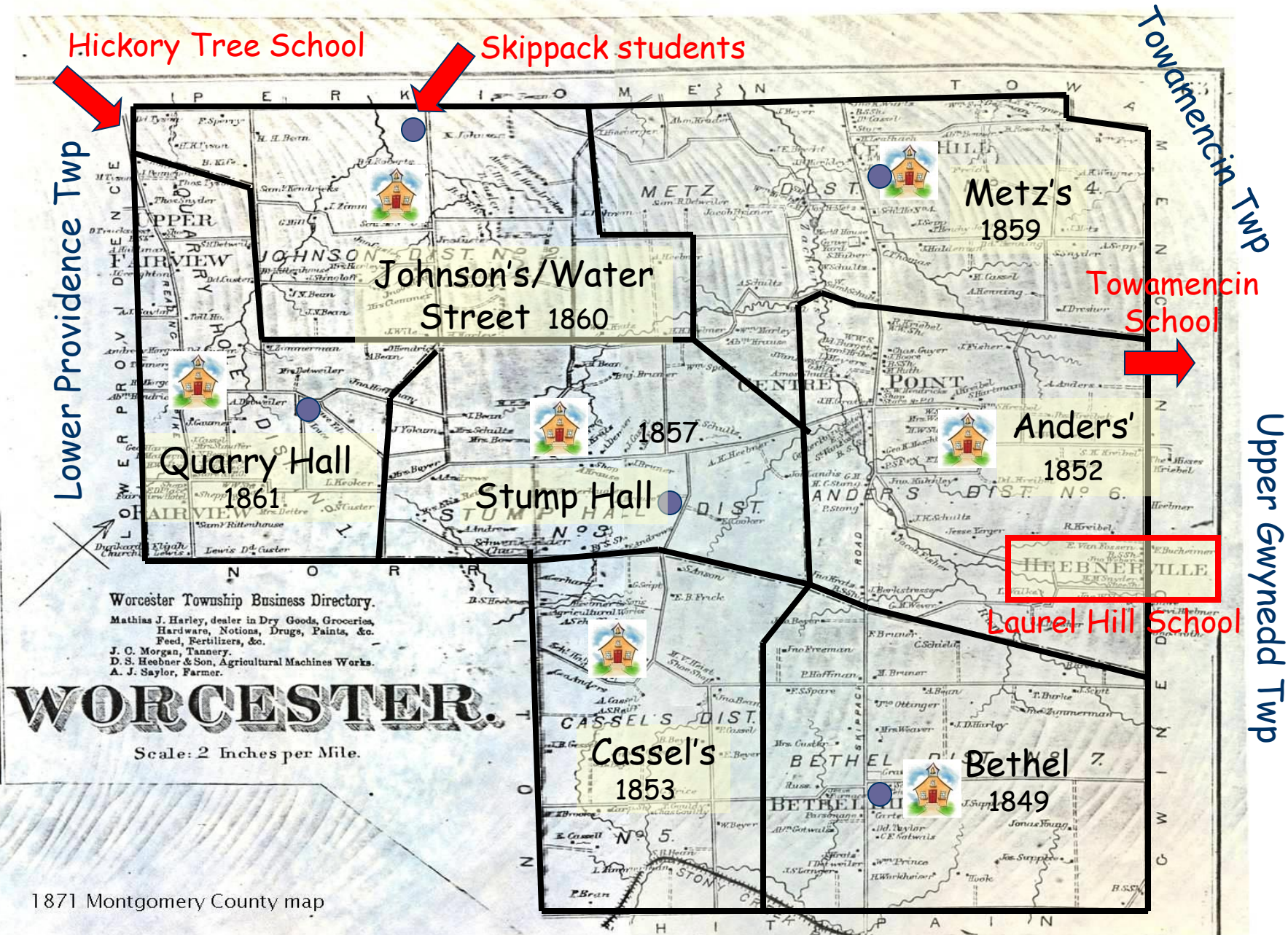
Before the 1850s, some Worcester pupils attended the Towamencin Schwenkfelder Church Community School.

- Hickory Tree School - 1883-1888

In the 1880s, Worcester and Lower Providence Township ran the Hickory Tree School as a joint venture. A small building on the Bridaltown property on Germantown Pike may be the remnants of this school.







Hickory Tree School

Skippack students

Lower Providence Twp

Towamencin Twp

Upper Gwynedd Twp

Johnson's/Water Street 1860

Quarry Hall 1861

Stump Hall 1857

Metz's 1859

Anders' 1852

Cassel's 1853

Bethel 1849

Towamencin School

Laurel Hill School

Worcester Township Business Directory.  
 Mathias J. Harley, dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries,  
 Hardware, Notions, Drugs, Paints, &  
 Feed, Fertilizers, &c.  
 J. C. Morgan, Tannery.  
 D. S. Heebner & Son, Agricultural Machines Works.  
 A. J. Saylor, Farmer.

**WORCESTER.**

Scale: 2 Inches per Mile.

1871 Montgomery County map



# Report of Teacher to Board of Directors.

To George M. Weber Secretary Board of Directors, of Worcester District, Montgomery Co

Report of Jacob Bruner Teacher of School No Bethel for the month of March 1856

Books used Testament, Cobbs 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>d</sup>, 3<sup>d</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>, Readers, Porters do, Cobbs, Spelling Books, Arithmetic, Roses, Vogels, Greenleaf, and Emersons, Grammars, Browns and Smiths, Geography, Michels, Algebra, Dows

Branches taught Orthography, Reading, Writing, Geography, Arithmetic, and Algebra

Hamilton, State Printer

NAMES OF SCHOLARS.	AGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL.	PROGRESS.	DEPARTMENT.		
<i>John Zimmerman</i>	7																																12	<i>Middling</i>	<i>Middling</i>		
<i>Walter Zimmerman</i>	8																																	11	<i>Good</i>	<i>Middling</i>	
<i>Isaac S. Zimmerman</i>	9																																	5	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	
<i>Abraham Priddy</i>	7																																	23	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	
<i>Franklin Smith</i>	9																																	21	<i>Middling</i>	<i>Middling</i>	
<i>Washington Supplee</i>	8																																	15	<i>Middling</i>	<i>Middling</i>	
<i>James Ailly</i>	7																																	16	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	
<i>Samuel Bruner</i>	13																																	18	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	
<i>John Egan</i>	11																																	13	<i>Middling</i>	<i>Middling</i>	
<i>Silvester Bean</i>	5																																				
<i>Charles L. Waas</i>	10																																				
<i>Andrew M. Waas</i>	9																																				
<i>Leslie Supplee</i>	9																																				
<i>William Sienk</i>	7																																		16	<i>Middling</i>	<i>Middling</i>
<i>Frederick Waas</i>	7																																				
<i>Jacob Zimmerman</i>	15																																		6	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Edgar Bruner</i>	6																																				
<i>Franklin Zimmerman</i>	12																																		7	<i>Middling</i>	<i>Middling</i>
<i>David Hearley</i>	14																																		4	<i>Middling</i>	
<i>Edmund Zimmerman</i>	14																																	4	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	

The school master was required to submit a monthly report to the School Directors which included attendance, academic progress, and behavior. There were no mandatory attendance rules. Class was often held on Saturdays.



Detwiler Warren J.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14½	Average	25 2/3
Dettra William	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15	Good	20 2/3
Dettra James										7	Average	11
Detwiler John	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23	Average	11
Dettra Abraham												11
Detwiler Milton										2		11
Jauner Wilson	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18½	Average	11
Keyser Abraham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	16	Indifferent	11
Knowles Benjamin Jr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14½	Average	11
Mattern William	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20½	Average	11
Pipher John	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6½	Average	11
Pipher George W.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	Good	11
Pipher Oliver	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	Average	11
Rittenhouse John	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	Average	11

Progress and deportment were rated as "very good," "good," "middling," "poor," "very poor," or "indifferent."



## WRITTEN EXERCISES.

Multiply

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2. 527 by 70.     | 11. 4500 by 3500.    |
| 3. 947 by 60.     | 12. 8700 by 6500.    |
| 4. 2085 by 200.   | 13. 56300 by 25100.  |
| 5. 2107 by 400.   | 14. 72800 by 3200.   |
| 6. 6070 by 500.   | 15. 70900 by 40300.  |
| 7. 8345 by 7000.  | 16. 687000 by 36500. |
| 8. 3170 by 8000.  | 17. 907000 by 4900.  |
| 9. 7524 by 1500.  | 18. 807000 by 24300. |
| 10. 8641 by 6300. | 19. 378000 by 20500. |

## WRITTEN EXERCISES

IN ADDITION, SUBTRACTION, AND MULTIPLICATION.

- Susan and Jane tried which could count the greater number in 15 minutes; Susan counted 65 and Jane 74 a minute; how many did Jane count more than Susan? *Ans.* 135.
- A weaver, desiring employment in a silk-mill at Pater-son, started from a point 312 miles distant, and walked 15 miles a day for 12 days; how far was he then from Pater-son? *Ans.* 132 miles.
- Mrs. Brown bought 12 yards of oil-cloth at 65 cents a yard, 15 yards of drugget at 45 cents a yard, and 32 yards of ingrain carpet at 75 cents a yard; what did she pay for her purchases? *Ans.* \$38.55.
- A cashier in a store has \$1200 a year, out of which he pays \$6 a week for board, \$0.75 a week for washing, \$2.50 a month for car-fare, and about \$10 a week for his other ex-penses; what can he save in a year? *Ans.* \$299.
- A builder bought 7 thousand shingles at \$8.25 per thou-sand, 250 pounds white paint at \$0.15 a pound, 150 gallons linseed oil at \$0.45 a gallon, and 20 gallons white varnish at \$1.37 a gallon; what was his entire bill? *Ans.* \$190.15.

- A lady bought two cottage sets of chamber furniture at \$35 each, 2 wire mattresses at \$4.50, 2 hair mattresses at \$22, a chiffonier for \$15, and an easy-chair for \$8.75; what was her bill? *Ans.* \$146.75.
- The light from a certain star is 1 year in reaching the earth; if light moves at the rate of 186,000 miles in a second, and there are 86,400 seconds in one day and 365 days in a year, what is its distance? *Ans.* 5,865,696 million miles.
- I bought for my sitting-room 8 rolls of wall-paper at \$0.45 a roll, 7 rolls at \$0.25, and 30 yards of bordering at 6 cents a yard; the paper-hanger charged \$3.50 for putting it on; what was the cost of papering the room? *Ans.* \$10.65.
- For the above room I bought 52 yards of body Brussels carpet at \$1.25 a yard, 3 shades at \$0.75 each, 3 pairs of lace curtains at \$4.25 a pair, and 3 curtain-poles at \$0.75 each; what was my bill? *Ans.* \$82.25.
- Mrs. Jackson bought 1 dozen pillow-cases at 10 cents each, half a dozen bolster-cases at 20 cents each, 1 dozen sheets at 45 cents each, 3 pair of blankets at \$5.25 a pair, and a dozen huckaback towels at 25 cents each; what was the whole bill? *Ans.* \$26.55.
- An importer sold three lots of silks, the first containing 15 pieces of 48 yards each, at \$1.75 a yard; the second 17 pieces of 45 yards each, at \$2 a yard; the third 18 pieces of 51 yards each, at \$2.25 a yard; what did he receive for the whole? *Ans.* \$4855.50.
- Samuel Goodwin & Co. sold to Wood and Wilson, Oct. 9, 1894, the following: 450 bushels wheat, at 54 cents a bushel; 250 bushels oats, at 31 cents; 750 bushels corn, at 55 cents. Nov. 12, S. G. & Co. bought of Wood and Wilson 375 bushels rye, at 45 cents, and 160 bushels barley, at 64 cents; required the balance of the account. *Ans.* \$461.85, in favor of S. Goodwin & Co.

S. a. 4.

The textbooks used and subjects taught were also listed on these reports. The historical society has several of these textbooks in its library.



# Cobb's New Spelling Book in Six Parts 1854

## Subjects

- Alphabet
- Monosyllables
- Two Syllables
- Single Consonants
- Double Consonants
- Letter Sounds
- Long & Short Sounds
- Various & Peculiar Sounds of the Vowels
- Diphthongs & Triphthongs
- Various Sound of Consonants
- Verbal Distinctions, Variable Orthography, Pronouns, etc.



# Mitchell's A System of Modern Geography 1876

## Subjects

- Natural or Physical Geography
- Astronomical or Mathematical Geography
- Civil or Political Geography
- West/East Hemispheres
- North America
  - Position + Extent
  - Natural Features
  - Products
  - Population
  - Chief Towns
  - Education

## Sample Questions from the Text

- Where is Pennsylvania? Length and breadth? Area?
- Of the Mountains? Which the highest? How high? What of valleys?
- What of the Delaware River? Of the Susquehanna? What rivers in the west?
- Soil? Climate?
- Products? What of the coal-fields? What of petroleum?



# Worcester's School System

In 1885, a formal system of grades was adopted. In 1886, the "first graduating class" completed their education in Worcester's schools.



In 1889, these students made up the fourth graduating class of the township, all from one-room schools.





In 1908, 44 students made up Worcester's first "high school" (9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grades), which was held in the downstairs meeting room of Farmer's Union Hall. Students walked or rode horseback to school here for the next four years, until the Worcester High School was built next door.



# Worcester's First High School - Built 1912



Designed by local architect Milton Bean, the building had just four large rooms, plus a basement. The highest grade was 10<sup>th</sup> grade; graduates attended Norristown or Lansdale High School to finish their education.

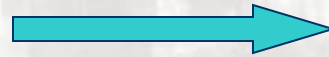


# Consolidation - 1915

- In 1915, a meeting of Worcester residents was called to discuss closing the one-room schoolhouses and centralizing the township's schools.
- Originally, all students were to attend one consolidated school in Center Point, but Fairview School petitioned to remain open and serve the Fairview Village area through grade 8.
- The newly built Worcester High School became a consolidated school, with grades 1 through 10 taught in just four large rooms.

Fairview #1

Water St. #2



Fairview School

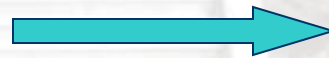
Stump Hall #3

Metz's #4

Anders' #5

Bethel #6

Cassel's #7



Worcester School



# Sale of One-Room Schoolhouse Buildings - 1916



- After consolidation, the one-room schoolhouses (except for Fairview) were no longer needed.
- A public auction was held at Farmers' Union Hall on February 28, 1916, attended by about 200 citizens.
- The total from all of the sales (six buildings, as well as bells, blackboards, and stoves) amounted to \$2,765.60.





- Since students were no longer attending neighborhood schools, transportation had to be provided.
- In 1916, a new 2-ton Republic truck chassis was purchased from the Dresher Motor Co. of Lansdale for \$1525. The body was built by the Boyertown Carriage Co. for \$240.
- J. Lyndale Hileman was chauffeur at the rate of \$27 per month.
- Several private vehicles were also put into service.



## Worcester School, circa 1958



Additions were made to the building in the 1930s and the 1950s. Once Methacton High School was built, the school became an elementary school.





The historic Worcester School was demolished in 1998, and the new Worcester Elementary School was built on the site. It is now the only elementary school in Worcester Township.



# Sources

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