

FORGOTTEN PLACES: SCHOOLHOUSE #9

By: Karen Ferguson, Town of Kirkwood Historian

One of the first articles I wrote as the Town Historian was about School #9 and the Sherwood Valley Grange No. 1589. It was written in November 2021 and focused on the history of granges and specifically the Sherwood Valley Grange. While this article is still about that grange, I want to follow-up and talk a little bit more about the history of School #9 as a part of my current series "Forgotten Places."

The original structure of Sherwood Valley Grange No. 1589 was a school. There has been some incorrect history recorded about when the school was built. I don't know the exact date, I wish I did. In the Broome County History Book, there is a section about Conklin that says all the schools were built by 1838. Because this isn't considered a primary source, I don't have proof of that. However, I do know that the school is listed as #24 on the 1855 map. It was renumbered to #9 when Kirkwood separated from Conklin and is listed as such on the 1866 map. School #9 was already located on David Langdon's property when he purchased it from its previous owner, Ambrose Heine (sp?). Mr. Langdon and his wife, Elenor, officially deeded a part of the west half of Lot 23 to the Trustee of School District No. 9 on September 8, 1874 for the price of \$30. The property was "bounded on the south by the Stage Road leading from Binghamton City to Windsor Village, on the west by lands formerly owned by Israel Keys (deceased) and on the north and east by lands owned by Ozias Ferguson. To simplify the location of School #9, it was located on the north side of the Old Windsor Road and in close proximity to where Johnson Road once intersected it.

Another deed dated June 9, 1933, between Verona Keys Divine to Francis Hastings, Trustee of School #9 was granted where the school once again paid \$150 to "First, that the party of the second part (School #9) shall quietly enjoy the said premises. Second. That said Verona Keyes Divine will forever warrant the title to said premises." The boundaries were the same as previously mentioned in the first deed but with updated owners and the road on the south side listed as the lands conveyed to Broome County for the reconstruction of the Binghamton Windsor State highway.

It is my belief that the age of School #9 has been misunderstood due to the number change, the separation of Towns, and then the two deeds. This school was used until December 18, 1941, when it was incorporated into the Windsor Central School District. It was the first Common School District to close and merge with District Number One of Windsor.

This school sat vacant until twelve people decided to form a grange. A formal meeting was held on January 30, 1947, in the old school and the Sherwood Valley Grange was formed (named after the school neighborhood). Presiding over the meeting was Mr. Maurice Mallory of Susquehanna Valley Grange, Deputy State Master. The charter contained 54 signatures and the following officers were elected:

Master: Ellis Jones; **Overseer:** Carl Kennerup; **Lecturer:** Marge Douglas (Mrs. Edward);
Steward: Harry Schwartz; **Assistant Steward:** Neil Kennerup; **Chaplain:** Catherine Yeingst;
Treasurer: Edward Douglas; **Secretary:** Maisie Jones Jr.; **Gatekeeper:** A.P. Miller;
Ceres: Catherine Mathis (Mrs. Joseph); **Pomono:** Eleanor Eleniewski (Mrs. Henry);

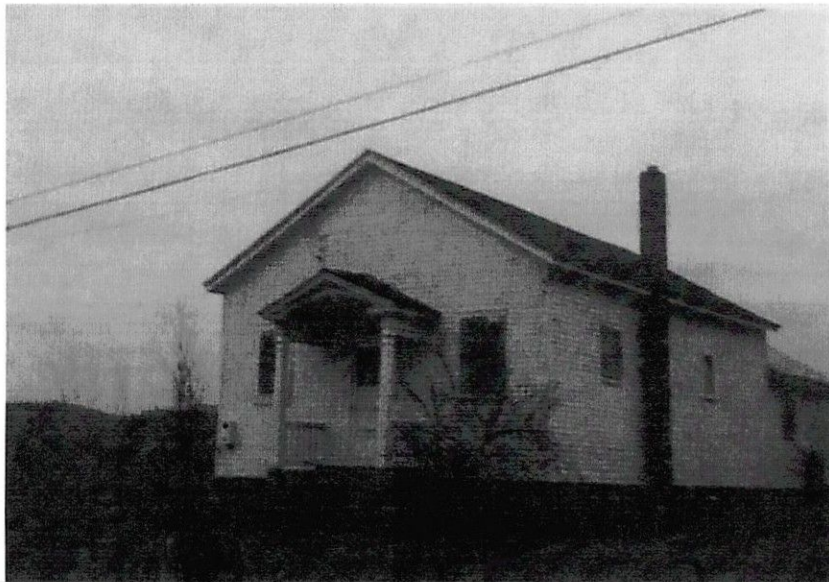
Flora: Rita Colpitts (Ms. Milford); **Lady Assistant Steward:** Elba Swartz (Mrs. Thomas Robebson)
Chairman of the Executive Committee: Milford Colpitts

Once the incorporation papers were drawn, the Grange petitioned the Windsor Central School District for a special school meeting to sell Schoolhouse #9. On September 10, 1947, the Sherwood Valley Grange accomplished that goal and purchased the building for \$1.00 by a unanimous vote in hopes that it would be a viable community center and meeting place.

However, in 1953, the State acquired the property for \$8000 for the construction of Route 17. The Grange used this money to relocate Schoolhouse #9 to its existing location at 550 Johnson Road. Once relocated, the building was expanded to accommodate the various activities and growing membership. This was a vital grange hosting and training junior granges, scout meetings, community functions, etc. About 15 years ago, membership dropped. Since Pete and Tina Penny were in leadership and had tried to increase membership to no avail, they started holding their auctions there. Unfortunately, the floor collapsed in 2017. Due to lack of grange membership and the building needing extensive repair, the building has sat empty ever since and is slowly deteriorating.

As the Town Historian, it is my desire to try to save the original school structure that is close to 200 years old. Efforts have been made to start cleaning out the debris that was left behind. Before work can continue, the New York State Grange has asked that we hold a membership drive. Once we have a minimum of 11 members, the NYS Grange officials can advise us and fundraisers can be held to save this piece of history so it can once again be used as a grange and a place for community gatherings.

If you would like to be involved in restarting the Sherwood Valley Grange No. 1589, please contact me via email: historian@townofkirkwood.gov.



Schoolhouse #9 - original structure (before additions)