

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Story of Concord School

In the 19th century, children were educated in country schools – usually one room structures with one teacher for all students of various ages. In current day Indian Hill, there were three such schoolhouses: Jefferson (1851), Franklin (1869) and Washington (1873). Camp Dennison had a 2-story schoolhouse. A fourth in the area was the Weller School (1876) on Hopewell Road, which was part of the Sycamore School District, and a fifth structure was in the current Kenwood neighborhood. It was the Concord School.

Located at the corner of Montgomery and Galbraith Roads, it was typical of the period. Constructed in 1857, the building was similar to Jefferson School with its rectangular façade and belfry atop the roof. Former student Ethel Todd George who attended Concord from 1st – 8th grade in the early 1900s had vivid memories.

Ethel recalled occasionally riding to school with her brother, Clifford, on little black ponies. Their horses were tied to a fence post outside while school was in session. Ethel and Clifford always carried a bundle of hay on their saddle for the ponies' lunch. Some of the time, the duo walked the 1 ½ miles to school or rode bicycles. When she was 6 years old, the one room school had one teacher, Miss Rothchild, for all eight grades. Later the room was partitioned, and Ethel's aunt (Maggie Todd) taught the lower grades.

The school had no indoor plumbing, and two outdoor privies were about 100 yards away. The one on the north side was for girls and the one on the south for boys. Ethel reminisced that it was a long walk uphill to get there. Between the toilets and the school was the playground. Behind the school, the woods were fenced off, and children were not supposed to climb it. One day, the students disobeyed and went over the fence into the woods to pick wildflowers. And when they returned, Miss Rothchild was waiting with a switch, which she used on the boys and girls. Ethel noted that was the only spanking she ever had as a child. Also outside was the water pump, with a pail beside it. There was no indoor water; it had to be brought in manually.



Ethel Todd (r.) and Hawley Todd riding ponies to Concord School.

Inside there was no lighting system. Slant top desks were set up in rows. Ethel's class consisted of 3 boys and herself. The 4 students were together for all their elementary years. Miss Rothchild taught all subjects, but Ethel specifically remembered "lots of math". Science and agriculture were taught. At that time the surrounding area was farmland. During agriculture class people came to Concord School to demonstrate farming equipment and machinery, such as milk separators, and incubators. Children learned about crop rotation and conservation. Elocution was another subject. During classroom time, Miss Rothchild taught one class while the others applied themselves to desk work, and she rotated amongst the grades. Concord School competed with other local schools in spelling bees.

Miss Rothchild and later Maggie Todd drove to school by horse and buggy.

Besides teaching, they supervised recess and cooked lunch. Ethel remembered her instructors making large kettles of homemade soup on the top of the pot-bellied stove. That stove was the only source of heat for the school, so the teachers had to keep it stoked all day.

The one room school was replaced with a new Concord School built up the road during the Depression as a WPA project. Situated on 7 acres, the new school served students in current day Indian Hill district. For decades children attended it for grades K-8 and then later for K-3. In 1977 the Indian Hill Board of Education voted to close Concord School because of declining enrollment and extensive repairs needed for the 40-year-old building. In 1978 the site and structures at 8401 Montgomery Road were sold to Yavneh Day school, current day Rockwern Academy.

When Concord School closed its doors, a "farewell fling" was held on June 1, 1977. Families brought picnics and students marched, sang, and demonstrated physical education activities. One song had these lyrics: "*We will sing about this school and what it's meant to you and me, sing about its place in the community...*" Thus concluded an educational era spanning 120 years (1857-1977).

