

NORTH COVENTRY SCHOOLS (1847-1997)

A chronological history of each school: taken from newspaper and school record accounts, maps. Compiled by Spencer Claypoole, Temple Road, member of the Township Historical Com.

Prior to 1902 there was no high school in the township. At the time there were seven school houses in the township; the law required that children have a school house within two miles (walking distance, although some students rode to school on the bare back of the family mule) of their home. In 1880 teachers in the township were paid \$35 a month. Student class size was about 35 pupils (children were of various ages, 5 to 15 years), occupying a one room school house. Children, often, had chores to help around the school house. A major task included upkeep of a stove/furnance on the first floor or in the basement of the school house. The helper, in cold weather, had to arrive at the school early to warm it up. Newspaper reports mention that school board authorities were neglectful of funding proper heating equipment. In 1903 teachers were paid \$40-\$45 a month. In 1902 the School Board authorized a Township High School. The North Coventry High School opened in 1913. For the ten intervening years classes were held first at the Pottstown Landing School and, then, moved to the Cedarville School House. Students from neighboring townships could the attend the North Coventry High School if their own township didn't provide high school grades. Prior to 1916, students in North Coventry completed the twelfth grade of high school in Pottstown. With township consolidation of schools in northern Chester County, the North Coventry High School had its last graduating class in 1955.

The school term in 1873 was for six months, beginning in September and ending in March of the following year. Prior to the PA Free Public School Act (1834), establishing schools in the commonwealth children were, only, able to attend schools that were under the auspices of a private or religious group. However, such schools were, according to information from early township maps and census information, non existent in North Coventry township. In some rural areas in the early 1800's, farmers would hire a teacher to instruct their children. Or a family could provide private tutorial services for their children. At this time no information is available about any earlier schools in the township before the 1840's. Both of the Reformed churches (Coventryville Brethren and Shenkle UCC) had Sunday schools where reading and writing was taught so that children could read and understand the Bible and church precepts. These two churches were established in 1734 and 1838. Otherwise, a child would have to travel to Pottstown (or a neighboring town) to obtain schooling or board at a private school. An 1888 newspaper item noted that the nine schools of North Coventry township opened for a term of nine months beginning in late August. Two years earlier the school term was for seven months. Early school buildings were a one room school house. In 1881/84 the township authorized the building of three new school houses , each with two rooms.

By 1884 students were assigned to Primary and Grammar school grades. This required two classrooms in some of the township schools and two teachers. At the end of this write-up a schedule of a typical school day is given for 1903 and 1919.

The schools of North Coventry Township are listed in alphabetical order with the High School at the end of the list. Only those schools in the present (1996) boundaries of the township are

given. Often, exact dates of establishing/closing of a school house are not clearly known. The opening of a school, then, is known by the earliest newspaper account or other documentation that exists. However, in 1952, the various township school houses closed with the opening of the North Coventry Elementary School on South Hanover Street (behind the High School). Today, there are architectural remains of many of the old school houses, most being used as family homes, one a business and another incorporated into a church. Accounts of these school buildings are given in chronological order.

Cedarville School

West Cedarville Road

1847: Township map locates Stumptown School House on Laurelwood road. (opened by 1847 2 John Stamm in teacher)
 29 May 1869: teacher, Laura R. Ecker (thru January, 1889 - Primary teacher; 1891, Grammar teacher); students, 35.

20 February 1880: school overcrowded.

21 January 1881: teacher, Mr. D. B. Derr; school building condemned by the county 12 years ago but still in use, heating stove not working adequately.

9 February 1884: teacher, Lewis R. Harley.

26 April 1884: bid accepted for construction of the Cedarville School (a two room school) on Cedarville Road. *Probably on property of Geo. Stubblebine*

28 August 1884: Grammar teacher, Miss Emma Irwin; Primary teacher, Miss Carrie Stamm.

19 March 1885: same as above.

8 January 1887: Grammar teacher, Emma L. Irwin; Primary teacher, George W. Smale.

12 February 1889: Grammar teacher, Hanna N. Bruhner.

30 Junw 1891: Primary teacher, Annie Stubblebine.

19 June 1900: Grammar teacher, George F. Berricker; Primary teacher, Miss Irene Freigh..

7 June 1902: Grammar teacher, Miss Catharine Root; Primary teacher, Miss Irene Freigh.

25 June 1904: teacher, Gertrude Ecker.

1904-1908: Harvey Vanderslice, HS principal (grades 9 & 10)

1908-1909: Henry Benfield, HS principal

1909-1910: Thomas Plank, HS principal

1901-1910: Norman Acker, HS principal

1910-1911, Thomas Plank, HS principal

1911-1912, Joseph Quig, HS principal

1952: School building closed.

In 1889 or thereabouts, Mary Longacre (grandmother of Isabel Rosewarne) began school at Cedarville. In her first year her teacher was Laura Ecker and the next year she had Laura's sister, Gertrude, in the opposite class room.

Franklin School

Temple Road

1847: Township map locates Franklin School House (opened by 1842, teacher in census) *Reuben Hoffecker in 1857?*

1873: Township map locates Franklin School House *John Alderman 1842?*

9 February 1884: teacher, Miss Emma Irwin

6 May 1885: old school torn down (11 August 1882) and to be replaced by a new one.

8 January 1887: teacher, Miss Laura Hoffecker.

1908/10: George Moore, primary teacher.
 1911/12: Helen S. Shaner, primary teacher; secondary teacher, Florence Halderman.
 1913/15: Helen S. Shaner, primary teacher.
 1916/17: Belle H. Rambo, primary teacher.
 1918/19: Mary L. Smith, primary teacher
 1952: School closed.

Shenkel School (formerly, Sheetz's School House; old records give Shenkle School)

Schenkel and Unionville Roads (SE corner, on old maps)

1847: Township map locates Shenkles School House *Copied by 1842, teacher in course David Kulp, teacher in 1857? Charles Rinehart, 1842?*

1873: Township map locates Shenkles School House

19 December 1882: L.R. Harley, teacher.

17 May 1883: school directors authorize a new school in the Shenkle District.

9 February 1884: teacher, Miss Alice Dotterer

6 November 1888: teacher, Clara E. Knerr.

3 October 1889: teacher, Clara E. Knerr and Annie Trubblebine. *(Stubblebine)*

30 June 1891: teacher, George Berricker.

4 March 1893: teacher George T. Berriker.

15 January 1900: teacher, Miss Henrietta Fox.

19 June 1900: teacher, Miss Hannah Fox.

7 June 1902; teacher, Miss Laura Spiece.

25 June 1904: teacher, Miss Florence Fogelsanger

9 September 1940 School Board sells the school (extensive repairs needed); teacher, Flora Smith.

1903 Shenkle School House (Record of Florence Fogelsanger Murphy 13 February 1938)

9:00 am ringing of school bell (in the Belfrey, but at the front school door at other schools),

followed by short devotional period; 15 minuet am and pm recesses

12:00 to 1:00 pm Lunch; a small hand bell called the children back into classes; a tap bell on the teacher's desk began classes

4:00 pm end of school day. Ralph Haws and the Yocum children rode their family mules to school; the mules found their way back to the family barns after dropping off the children. The children either walked home from school or their dads would come for them on a mule. The

Updegrave children who lived on the farm (Diveny) on Cold Springs Road, walked to school. The Haws farm was located at the bottom of Blackmat Road.

South Pottstown School

Hanover Street

9 June 1891: ground purchased for school. *Don McDaniel Haverford*

30 June 1891: teacher, Miss Knauer.

19 June 1900: Grammar teacher, Miss Marcella Frye; Primary teacher, Miss Catharine Root.

7 June 1902: Grammar teacher, Albert F. Frick; Primary teacher, Marcella E. Frye.

25 June 1904: Grammar teacher, Albert Frick; Primary teacher, Miss Flora Hipple.

1952: School closed; a four room school house with five grades.

Union School (may be the same as the Hoeffecker School House - 1881, Hoeffecker's Corner)
 Hoeffecker Road

1 February 1889: teacher, Miss Annie Moore
30 June 1891: teacher, Annie O. Frederick.
19 June 1900: teacher, Miss Florence Geiger.
7 June 1902: teacher, Miss Hattie Lawrence.
25 June 1904: teacher, Katie Root.
Closed prior to 1940.

Halcyon School House

Keim Street and Cedarville Roads (SW corner)

1847: Township map locates Halcyon School House

1873: Township map locates Halcyon School House

20 February 1880: school overcrowded.

6 September 1881: school house sold.

About 1880 Rachel Frick (grandmother of Isabel Rosewarne and a descendant of the Townships' Martin Urner) attended the Halcyon School. For Recess she and the other students went across the street to play in the Coventry Brethren church yard as the school did not have a playground area. Later on, Rachel attended high school in Pottstown, after taking the qualifying test) and in the winter time could skate the old canal to get to/from school.

*Opened by 1842, teacher in room
Martin Humberger in 1843 & 1857*

Kenilworth School (called the Madisonville School until 1884)

South Keim Street

17 September 1881: opening of new two room school house.

9 February 1884: teacher, Miss Essie M. Law; fined for whipping a boy - too severely.

Grammar teacher, John H. Halderman

18 January 1889: teacher, Alice P. Dotterer

30 June 1891: Grammar teacher, vacant; Primary teacher, Sadie Miller.

19 June 1900: Grammar teacher, Truman Wade (became a lawyer, worked in West Chester);

Primary, Miss Sadie Miller.

7 June 1902: Grammar teacher, George F. Berricker, Primary teacher, Miss Sadie E. Miller.

25 June 1904: Grammar teacher, Florence Kostenbader; Primary teacher, Sadie Miller.

1952: School closed.

Pottstown Landing School (formerly, Wanger's School House)

Laurelwood Road

20 February 1880: school overcrowded

17 September 1881: opening of new two room school house.

9 February 1884: teacher: Miss Ida Yarnall.

8 January 1887: Grammar teacher, Miss Annie Garber; Primary teacher, Miss Ella Bush.

30 June 1891, teacher, Maggie Kirlin.

19 June 1899: teacher, Emerson Wade.

7 June 1902: teacher Miss Gertrude B. Ecker.

1 September 1902: established as the new high school; principal, Clarence Gordon.

1904: Reid Kirkland: HS principal (taught at the Cedarville Farmer's Hall or the Grange).

1905/6: Irene Freigh, primary teacher.

1907: Mary E. Yorgey, primary teacher.

*School opened in
1868 on land donated
by George Wanger.
prior school*

1847: Township map locates Union School House
 1873: Township map locates Union School House
 9 February 1884: teacher, Miss Bush.
 1 January 1887: teacher, Miss Lizzie Shantz.
 15 January 1900: teacher, Isaac Scholl.
 19 June 1900: teacher, Miss Stella Leopold
 30 June 1891: teacher, Emma Tyson.
 19 June 1900: teacher, Miss Stella Leopold.
 7 June 1902 and 25 June 1904: teacher, Miss Alice K. Halderman.
 1914: teacher, Margaret E. Keim (later, Mrs. J. Ralph Saylor).
 School closed prior to 1940.

*Copied by 1842 census - teacher
 1842 - John Halderman?
 1857 - Reuben Heffelehen*

North Coventry High School South Hanover Street

4 Sept 1902: new high school to be built for students from the seven township schools; principal, Clarence Gordon. To have an Agricultural Department.
 February 1904: mention made of the burning of the old high school at Pottown Landing.
 25 June 1904: HS teacher, Reed Kirkland.
 1912-1916: HS principal, Clyde T. Saylor; academic subjects taught. Students from other Townships (which lacked a high school) could attend the high school.
 11 Feb 1913: dedication of the new high school; principal, Clyde Saylor; school board president, Joseph S. Haws. On six acres; four classrooms.
 1914: first graduating class; third year of high school added about this time.
 1916-1925: HS principals: Eugene Gernert, Leslie Shumaker, Stephen Bucher, Harold Budd, Rev. A.M. Dixon; fourth year of high school added (previously, students completed their 4th year in Pottstown); curriculum expanded to include cooking and sewing for the girls and shop work for the boys, commercial subjects introduced and a music course (1928).
 1925-1930: W. J. Drennen, HS principal
 1828: four more classrooms added.
 1930-1936: J. Leonard Halderman, Principal 1935: four more classrooms added.
 26 Mar 1934: School Board approves the addition of four new classrooms to the high school; school board president, George L. Haws.
 21 August 1936: Franklin Hege succeeded L. Leonard Halderman as school principal.
 1936-1940: F. B. Hege, HS principal; January 1838: HS Band organized. Also, debating team.
 1938: physical education added to the curriculum. 1940: sports program started (there were football and basketball teams in the 1930's). Harry Bickel, School Board President.
 1940-1955: Paul H. Grim, HS principal; HS Year Book, 'The Torch.'
 8 October 1954: formation of the Owen J. Roberts School District (7 north Chester County townships)
 1955: last official graduates of the North Coventry High School
 1955-1958 high school split between North Coventry High School and the Warwick School
 1955-1963: Paul H. Grim, HS principal
 1959: first graduating class of Owen J. Roberts HS
 14 June 1963: Paul C. Dunkelberger, supervising principal of the Northern Chester County School district.

21 October 1950: the existing school houses are to be consolidated when a new elementary school is built and occupied in 1952. A 12 classroom building with auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria. Cost of school \$250, 000. Situated on 5 ½ acres adjoining the High School on property from the John Halderman estate (cost of property \$5, 000). 1996: School building sold.

1919 Pottstown Landing School Program: taken from the record book (Owen J. Roberts HS Administration Building)

8:45 to 9:00 am Opening Exercises

9:00 to 9:20 am First Grade Arithmetic; Second Grade to 9:35; Third to 9:55; Fourth to 10:15; Fifth to 10:30am (ie. a new class every 15 to 20 minuets).

10:30 to 10:45 am Recess

10:45 to 11:00 am Fisrt Grade Reading; Second Grade to 11:15; Third to 11:30; Fourth to 11:45; Fifth to 12:00 am (ie. every 15 minuets another grade).

12:00 to 1:00 pm Lunch

1:00 to 1:20pm First Grade Reading; Second to 1:35; Third to 1:50, Fourth to 2:10 Fifth to 2:30pm.

2:30 pm to 2:45 pm Recess

2:45 to 3:00 pm Second Grade Spelling; to 3:10 Third Grade; to 3:45 Fourth and Fifth Grades Spelling and Language (History of Geography, a substitute for Language)

Tos. Demko
28 March

During recess at the Pottstown Landing School in 1919 one day the boys were playing marbles on the ground in the school's playground; a wind kicked up and blew the flag pole down. The pole fell on one of the young students and killed him. What a shock for all the other children!

Gladys McGrath, a member of the Township Historical Committee, provided information on her Haws and Updegrave grandparents and the Shenkel school. Her father, Ralph Haws, and his father both attended the Shenkel school.

Haws and Updegrave grandparents and the Shenkel school. Her father, Ralph Haws, and his father both attended the Shenkel school.

One Hundred & Fifty Year History of North Coventry Township Schools (1847-1997)
by Spencer Claypoole, Member, North Coventry Township Historical Committee

The building of a new elementary school in our township and the closing of the two school buildings along South Hanover Street ends an era in the history of school houses in the township. The 1913 opening of the two story 'old high school' building along South Hanover Street is a link to our one and two room schools of the last century. Little did I know this in 1947/48 at five years of age. My family and I travelled along the road to visit my grandmother who lived on a farm south of Lenhartsville. Indeed, that two story High School building, as it still was then, was a major landmark along our route. As I was just beginning school in a rural township, the building left an impressive image upon me.

Toward the turn of the century there was a growing need for North Coventry township to have its own High School. The High School building was authorized to be built in 1902. It was the townships' first four year High School. Prior to its opening in 1913, township students had to complete upper grades in Pottstown. In 1902 Clarence Gordon was appointed principal of the new High School. Until the new building was ready for occupancy, some high school classes were held at a building in Pottstown Landing. But in 1904 that building burned down. Next the Cedarville Farmer's Hall (presently, the Grange) was used. By 1916 the fourth year of high school was provided in the new building. This building remained the township's High School until 'consolidation' of the educational system of the seven northern Chester County townships began to take shape in 1955. 1955 was the year of the last graduating class. After 1955 the building, as we know, was used for elementary school purposes. One note of interest is that our township High School, also, accommodated students from neighboring townships who lacked a school for higher learning. Old newspaper clippings give curriculum expansion in the High School, eg. about 1925 cooking and sewing classes for the girls and shop work for the boys; in 1928 music was added; in 1938, band and physical education were added.

Actually, our township school system is about one hundred and fifty years old (1847-1997). In 1834 the Pennsylvania legislature authorized the opening of one room school houses in townships to be located within a two mile walking distance for children. Although a few kids in those early days found other ways to get to school other than walking; some (Ralph Haws, the Yocom children) riding a family mule to school; the mule made its way back to the family barn alone. In the early days of public schooling, the school term was for 6 months, beginning in August. An 1847 map of North Coventry Township shows that there were 5 one room school houses. And these early school houses are still standing except for the Shenkel School in the western part of the township. The schools are the Stumptown School House at Cedarville, the Halycon School across from the Coventry Church of the Brethren, the Franklin School on Temple Road and the Union School on Hoeffecker Road.

These school houses, gradually, proved to be insufficient for the needs of township children. So, in the early 1880's, after some prodding, township school supervisors authorized the building of two room school houses, containing primary and secondary grades. This began the township era of the two room school houses. By 1940, the two room schools phased out the one room schools. In fact, the Halycon school closed in 1881. That same year new schools opened in

Cedarville on West Cedarville Road, in Kenilworth (originally, named the Madisonville School) on South Keim Street, in Pottstown Landing (originally, named the Wanger School) on Laurelwood Road. In 1891 a four room school was approved as the South Pottstown School on South Hanover Street. These last four school served educational needs of township children until they were closed in 1952. In that year the township opened the North Coventry Elementary School, located behind the High School. The new elementary school was built on 5 ½ acres of land from the John Halderman estate and contained 12 classrooms.

In 1888 the length of the school term increased to nine months. There were nine schools in operation according to a local newspaper: three of the one room school houses mentioned above and the three new two room school houses; the other three schools ?

In 1918, Mary L. Smith, a teacher at the Pottstown Landing School, described the school day for children as beginning at 8:45am. By 9:00 am opening exercises which could consist of roll call, a salute to the flag and a devotional reading were completed. Beginning at 9:00 am Miss Smith taught Arithmetic at 15/20 minuet intervals to grades 1 through 5. From 10:30 am to 10:45 am there was a recess. After recess Miss Smith taught Reading, again, every 15 minuets to grades 1 through 5. From noon to 1:00 pm there was a lunch break. Many students went to their home to eat lunch. Others could eat in the classroom and, then, play outside in the nice weather. Reading was, again, taught in the afternoon until 2:30 pm following the same schedule as used in the morning. A second recess was held from 2:30 pm until 2:45 pm. Spelling was the last session of the day to be taught to children in grades 1, 2, 3. The fourth and fifth grades had Spelling and Language for their 15/20 minuet time slot. However, Geography could be substituted for Language as the teacher saw fit. The school day ended at 4:00pm.

In a previous article about the Shenkel School House I described a typical school day in 1903. In the one room school houses, a student often arrived early to get the furnace going to warm up the school. When the school bell (in the belfry or at the front door of the school) sounded, students entered the school building. A small hand 'tap' bell, kept on the teacher's desk, was used to begin the individual class sessions. About 1880 when Rachel Frick attended the Halycon School, there was no playground so she and the other children went across the street to play in the yard surrounding the Coventry Church of the Brethren.

Some school teachers were from local families, eg. Smale, Stubblebine, Berrick, Root, Ecker, Halderman, Miller, Spiece, Knauer, Saylor. Salaries ranged from \$35 a month before 1900 to \$45 a month in 1918. When Miss Florence Fogelsanger began teaching at the Shenkel School House in 1903, she was an 18 year old graduate of the State Normal School in Shippensburg. In earlier times, teachers were as young as 16 years. Many teachers attended the West Chester State Normal School. In 1889 Mary Longacre began school at Cedarville, having as a teacher Laura Ecker one year and the next year, having Laura's sister, Gertrude, in the opposite classroom.

Newspaper articles and teacher roll call books contain the names of students who attended our various school houses throughout the decades. This information is on file at the Township building.

*The township
Census of 1842 indicates
5 teachers in the township
which means that the
original township schools
were open by 1842.
Spencer Waggoner*

The North Coventry School System

At the request of Betty Yocum, chairman of the North Coventry Historical Commission, a survey of North Coventry School book/volumes, in keeping at the Owen J. Roberts High School, was completed on 2 September 1993.

When consolidation of townships in northern Chester County took effect in 1958, township school offices turned over official books to the new school district, located on the grounds of the Owen J. Roberts High School in Pughtown, PA. These various books and volumes were stored for many years at the French Creek Elementary School building and more recently were moved to a closet at the district's main office in Pughtown. Future plans include an archives' room within the district or High School buildings.

The following materials were found in a review of former North Coventry Schools belongings.

There are five old books (four are oversized and two books are partially completed), entitled, 'Monthly Teacher Reports of Pottstown Landing, North Coventry, Chester County.'

1. The earliest book, '14 September 1904, commencing,' gives a listing of the text books used at the time, the names of the students, their ages, number of days attended, teacher names and salary and visitors to the school. The last entry is dated for '5 May 1905, ending,' for the 1905 school term.

List for boys on 14 September:

William Williams, 6 yrs.
Gus Evans, 14 yrs.
Ralph Williams, 11 yrs.
Wilson McFarland, 14 yrs.
Ralph Still, 9 yrs.
James McFarland, 10 yrs.
Joseph Fisher, 11 yrs.
Earl Kulp, 10 yrs.

Teacher: Irene Freigh,
\$40.00 per month
also for 1905/06

Visitor: George W. Moore,
County Superintendent

List for girls on 14 September:

Ruth Hoffman, 9 yrs.
Ada Halteman, 9 yrs.
Cora Halteman, 11 yrs.
Annie Fisher, 8 yrs.
Irma McFarland, 7 yrs.
Florence McFarland, 11 yrs.
Florence Williams, 8 yrs.
Nevada Evans, 13 yrs.
Evelyn Evans, 10 yrs.
Melissa Shaner, 13 yrs.
Helen Pierpont, 7 yrs.
Nellie Sterly, 10 yrs.
Harriet Kulp, 7 yrs.
Georgene Miller, 10 yrs.
Carrie Kellar, 13 yrs.
Erma Shaner, 7 yrs.

The same volume includes the schools years through 1912. Other teachers include Helen S. Pircher for 1906/07; Mary E. Yorgey (\$50. per month) for 1907/08; George Miller for 1908 to 1910; and Mrs. Helen Shaner (\$40. per month) for two years of 1910 to 1912.

2. The third book gives the school years of 1910 through 1912 of secondary children (ages were from 10 years to 16 years) with Florence Halderman as the teacher for \$50.00 per month.
3. The second book gives the school terms from 1912 to 1919. Helen S. Shaner was the school teacher from 1912 to 1915. Her salary was \$50. per month. Belle H. Rambo was teacher from 1915 to 1917. A list of class daily activities in 1916 is attached.

4. The fourth book contains the first term of the 1919 school year for the primary grade. The 14 February 1919 page is attached in which it is mentioned that a 'box social' was held and a Victrola bought with the proceeds.
5. The fifth volume contains the second term of 1919 and continues through 1921.

No School Board Minuets were found for the North Coventry School District.


There is a pamphlet of the North Coventry High School Alumni Banquet held on 22 September 1990 at the Sunnybrook Ballroom, Pottstown. Years covered are 1904 to 1958.

There are two issues of the North Coventry High School Year Book, 'The Torch.' Volume 14, 1954 and #15, 1955. The principal at the time was Paul H. Grim and the Administrative Assistant was Alvin S. Alderfer. 'The Torch' includes pictures and the students who graduated in those years. A picture of high school is included, with the 1912 building date.

The remaining materials are of five surveys completed in August 1944, one for each of the North Coventry Schools. A copy of the surveys was made except for the blue prints of each of the buildings:

- survey of South Pottstown Grade School, four pages (one page of pictures),
- survey of Cedarville School Building, also four pages,
- survey of the North Coventry High School, four pages,
- survey of Pottstown Landing School, four pages,
- survey of the Kenilworth Grade School, four pages.

Submitted by:


Spencer Claypoole

member of the Historical Commission

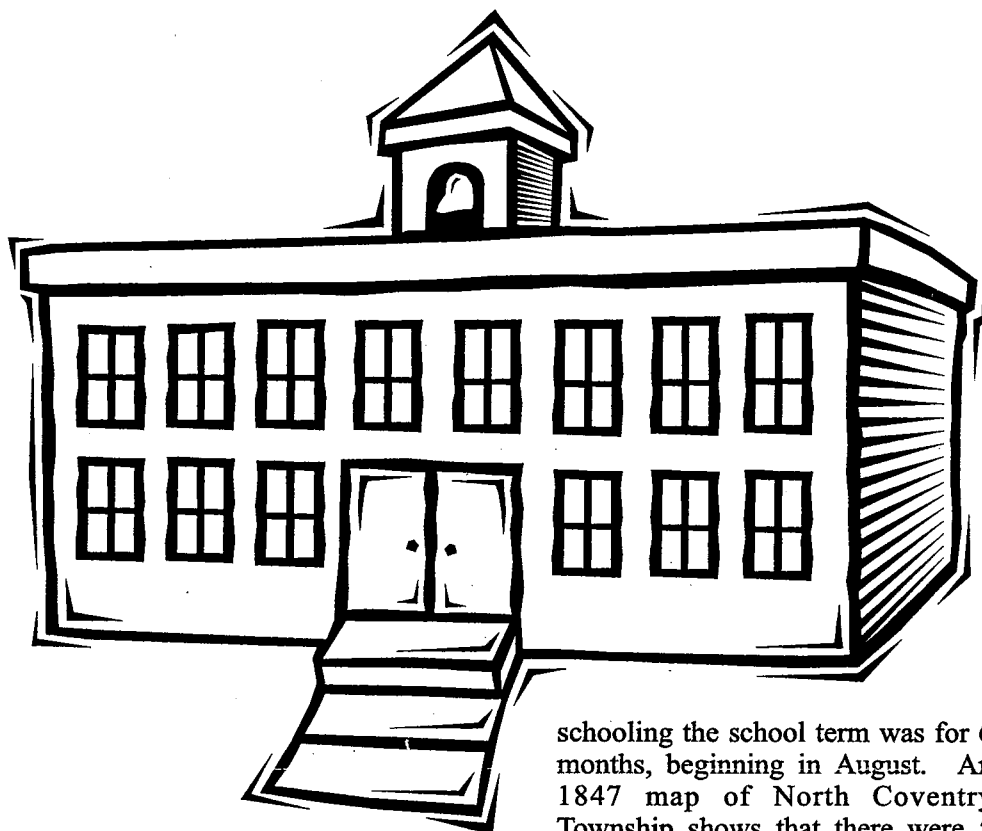
School Addresses:

The History of North Coventry Schools from 1847 to 1997

*by Spencer Claypoole, Member,
North Coventry Township Historical
Committee*

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continued on page 3

Police Week Scheduled For Mid-May

North Coventry Police will again be hosting POLICE WEEK AT COVENTRY MALL on May 15, 16 and 17 of this year. This annual Law Enforcement event is held to promote better communications between people in the community and area police officers. Police officers, correctional officers, fish and game commission officers and other law enforcement officials from many different agencies will be on hand to provide insight, answer questions and give demonstrations related to their profession. There will be many different educational displays including seized weapons and drug paraphernalia, K-9 units, prison contraband, bomb squad

equipment, and communications equipment. The North Coventry Town Watch will again be doing the very popular MetEd GPU Kid Print Program where youngsters 10 and under can have a picture ID card made while they wait. McGruff the Crime Dog and the Crash Dummies, Vince and Larry, will be making occasional appearances throughout the three day event. Past Police Week highlights include the PA State Police helicopter and the Brandywine Skyflight Care helicopter landing in the parking lot.

Police Week activities are a great opportunity for everyone, especially young people, to meet and interact with area police officers to find out what it's like to be in the



profession. Please keep an eye on the local papers for a schedule of Police Week events. We hope to see you in May!

School System History

continued from page 2

in Kenilworth (originally named the Madisonville School) on South Keim Street, and in Pottstown Landing (originally named the Wanger School) on Laurelwood Road. In 1891 a four-room school was approved as the South Pottstown School on Hanover Street. These last four schools served educational needs of Township children until they were closed in 1952. In that year the Township opened the North Coventry Elementary School, located behind the High School. The new elementary school was built on 5 1/2 acres of land from the John Halderman estate and contained 12 classrooms.

In 1888 the length of the school term increased to nine months. There were nine schools in operation according to a local newspaper: three of the one-room schoolhouses mentioned above and the three new two-room schoolhouses; the other three schools?

In 1918 Mary L. Smith, a teacher at the Pottstown Landing School, described the school day for children as beginning at 8:45 A.M. By 9:00 A.M. opening exercises, which could consist of roll call, a salute to the flag and a devotional reading, were completed. Beginning at 9:00 A.M. Miss Smith taught arithmetic at 15/20 minute intervals to grades 1 through 5. From 10:30 A.M. to 10:45

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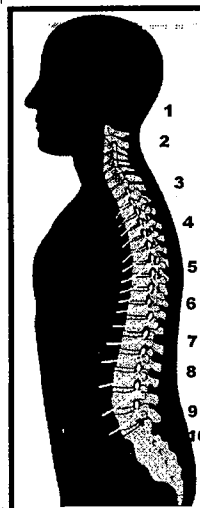
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5. Stomach and liver dysfunction
6. Gall bladder, pancreas, dysfunction of upper bowel
7. Kidney disorders, skin disorders, mild backache
8. Lumbago, low back pain, hip pain
9. Sciatica, constipation
10. Bladder disturbances, colon disorders, leg pain

1303 N. Charlotte Street
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History of The Township's Schools

continued from page 3

A.M. there was a recess. After recess, Miss Smith taught reading, again, every 15 minutes to grades 1 through 5. From noon to 1:00 P.M. there was a lunch break. Many students went to their home to eat lunch. Others could eat in the classroom and then play outside in nice weather. Reading was taught again in the afternoon until 2:30 P.M. following the same schedule as used in the morning. A second recess was held from 2:30 P.M. until 2:45 P.M. Spelling was the last session of the day to be taught to children in grades 1, 2, 3. The fourth and fifth grades had Spelling and Language for their 15/20 minute time slot. However, Geography could be substituted for Language as the teacher saw fit. The school day ended at 4:00 P.M.

In a previous article about the Shenkel School House, I described a typical school day in 1903. In the one-room schoolhouses, a student often arrived early to get the furnace

going to warm up the school. When the school bell (in the belfry or at the front door of the school) sounded, students entered the school building. A small hand "tap" bell, kept on the teacher's desk, was used to begin the individual class sessions. About 1880 when Rachel Frick attended the Halycon School, there was no playground so she and the other children went across the street to play in the yard surrounding the Coventry Church of the Brethren.

Some school teachers were from local families, eg. Smale, Stubblebine, Berricker, Root, Ecker, Halderman, Miller, Spiece, Knauer, Saylor. Salaries ranged from \$35 a month before 1900 to \$45 a month in 1918. When Miss Florence Fogelsanger began teaching at the Shenkel School in 1903, she was an 18 year old graduate of the State Normal School in Shippensburg. In earlier times, teachers were as young as 16 years. Many teachers attended

the West Chester State Normal School. In 1889 Mary Longacre began school at Cedarville, having as a teacher Laura Ecker one year and the next year, having Laura's sister, Gertrude, in the opposite classroom.

Newspaper articles and teacher roll call books contain the names of students who attended our various schoolhouses throughout the decades. This information is on file at the Township building.

Looking For Old Photos

The North Coventry Historical Commission is looking for old photographs of the Township, especially those of Pottstown Landing and the Old Schuylkill Canal. If anyone has such photographs and would be willing to give or lend them to the Commission, we would be most appreciative. Please call Betty Yocum, 326-1675 or bring the photos to the Township building

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Teacher Describes One-Room School

(Editor's note: An interesting view of the past is given by Mrs. Florence F. Murphy as she writes of her experiences as a teacher in a one-room school in Shenkel. A photo of the school and her class is on page 5.)

By FLORENCE A. MURPHY

During the Fall of 1903, I, as a girl of 18, came to Shenkel in

North Coventry township, Chester county, to begin my first term of teaching, having just graduated from the then three-year course of the State Normal school of my home community. I found at Shenkel a one-room school house nestled in a cove at the foot of Chestnut hill. The community seemed to cluster about this one spot. A brook flowed near by. A church with its well kept cemetery crowned the brow of a hill and a country store stood across the way. Within a radius of a mile some dozen homes added life to this rustic landscape.

Chestnut hill proper at that time was well covered with trees which presented nature at her best in vari-colored Autumnal dress. The early Spring rewarded your search with an abundance of arbutus if you were careful to find its hiding place beneath the leaves. Hav-

(Continued on Page Five)

★ ★ ★ SHENKEL SCHOOL —

(Continued From Page One)

ing been reared in the country, I could appreciate this rural setting. It was this appreciation plus an interest in the children and the community which drew me back to the spot for several terms of teaching.

I, however, had come to Shenkel with a more serious and realistic purpose—namely to become a teacher and to earn a salary of \$40 per month for eight months which was to be raised to \$45 if I made good. The school itself was very "countryfied" and this is no reflection upon the pupils or their parents. The house did have a furnace in the cellar and a belfry and there was a wash room with a water bucket and a basin. Two little houses on opposite sides of the school lot provided further facilities for the children.

The school bell that first morning called together some 30 pupils ranging in age from 6 to 15 years, which meant that there were some children in each of the seven or eight grades. A typical day opened at 9 o'clock with a short devotional period and roll-call followed by classes. Two 15 minute recesses with an hour at noon helped to break what would otherwise have been an endless succession of classes. A small hand bell called the children from their play to "books" and a tap bell on the teacher's desk announced classes. During recess of the first day a little youngster who had just started to school was asked by his uncle, passing by, how he liked school

and the boy replied that he hadn't learned anything yet.

THE SCHOOL WAS, in my judgment, somewhat undisciplined at first. It seemed necessary, so I thought, to whip one of the larger boys after school—there being no boycott on whipping at that time. I soon learned, however, that organization was needed rather than severe measures of discipline and before the school term was half over disciplinary problems were of no major consequence. No kindergarten facilities were available in the community so several 5-year olds were accepted upon the request of their parents. The older girls were most helpful in caring for them.

Much as these children may have missed in the light of modern educational standards, some values were gained. They learned to be co-operative both with the teacher and with one another. They learned to read and to spell. They learned to respect authority and property. Indeed they took pride in making the school room and the school lot more attractive. I cannot recall a destructive act or property on the part of any pupil.

There was no room for

the school year was the week of teachers institute held at the county seat.

Supervision was limited to one visit a year from the county superintendent with perhaps another visit from one or more township directors. A teacher under this system was queen in her own domain which either challenged initiative in the exercise of wise judgment and a conscientious performance of duty, or opened the way for irresponsible and shoddy service.

Free time was occasionally used to visit in the homes. This tended to bring pupils, teacher and parents into a sort of corporate family, the modern version being PTA.

I have never regretted the experience in a one-room school. It afforded opportunity to make a realistic study of human nature and to evaluate personality. It was also a sort of conditioner for later life experiences.

After Shenkel there was further scholastic preparation at Juniata college and the University of Pennsylvania followed by six years of college teaching and marriage to a minister. My husband and I together have enjoyed 35 years of pastorate work, 25 of which were in the city of Phila-

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delphia. The end is not yet. We are caring for the church here even though we live in our home of retirement, 411 Franklin Heights, Shippensburg.

... school in ... township. Those still living in the area who were in the picture can now see themselves when they were studying the three R's.

And remember their school marm, now Mrs. Florence Fogelsanger Murphy, who saved this picture all of these years. Mrs. Murphy, in the upper right hand corner, taught her last year at the school in 1904-05 and then completed graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania. She also taught at the university.

The former Norco school-marm then married a minister and she and her husband engaged in pastorate work in Philadelphia for 25 years. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy are now retired and living in Shippensburg.

She wanted her former pupils to know she still remembered them from the time of the one-room school house days. If you were a member of the 1904-05 class, scrutinize this picture carefully. You may "recognize" yourself.

The classmates of 1904-05 include, back row, left, Oliver Drumheller,

Lillian Updegrove, S. Ethel Houck, William Reigner and Clayton Reigner. Others standing, left, Lois Kinckinger, William Powell, Ernest May, Nellie Summons, Clara May and Earl Garner.

All others, left, two five-year-olds, believed to be the Dengler boy and the Boyer boy, Otto Oliver, Roy Dengler, Harold Kulp, Harold Reigner, Carrie Updegrove, Blanche Garner, Allen Drumheller, Ernest Kulp, Charlie Drumheller, Lola Dengler, Grace Hipple, Mary Houck, Ralph Houck, Merton Harner.

Those absent when the picture was taken were Elizabeth Amole, Harry Lacey, Harry Garner, Minerva Drumheller and Anna Harner. Some of the family names of the community at that time were Willauer, Geigley, Neidig, Snell, Smale and Smith. The photograph was taken by H. A. Abercromby. Mrs. Murphy said she received help in identifying the pupils from Mrs. Lillie Reed, 1932 South Hanover street.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1936



nature study, composition or art in the daily curriculum. But whenever possible jaunts into nature's laboratory were taken to gather Autumn leaves, discarded birds' nests, moss and in the Spring arbutus and other wild flowers. These were used to decorate the school room and afforded material for the writing of compositions on wild life and natural beauty. The pupils were encouraged to decorate these compositions, thus revealing some surprising and rather remarkable artistic ability. Needless to say that it also served to keep idle hands and thoughts busy creatively.

Four o'clock saw the children wending their several ways homeward but there remained chores for the teacher. The room needed to be tidied and the cellar furnace banked for the morrow. Usually a need was felt for a period of quiet and constructive thinking to plan for the next day. Radio and television sets were unknown. Movies and many other forms of entertainment were not available because automobiles for transportation did not exist. Thus modern distractions were no problem. A wholesome and tasty country-cooked supper plus a full night of rest did much to compensate for hardships along the way.

THERE WERE no committee departmental meetings to attend and in lieu of faculty meetings, a board of directors meeting, usually once a month, officed. The one highlight of