

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

ANNIVERSARY

As we celebrate this 100th anniversary of the establishment of a Union Free School and 50 years of Centralization we pay tribute to those who: founded our community and brought with them the desire to educate their children, to those farsighted leaders, parents, community, students, service personnel, graduates, administrators and teachers who have contributed to its present stature and have dreams and the vision to carry to success its mission in the future. We are proud of Middleburgh Central School and will continue to strive to keep its goals high and its future bright.

School History
By Helene S. Farrell
Village and Town Historian

Published by the
100th Anniversary Committee
April 1984
In cooperation with the
Board of Education of
Middleburgh Central School

Sincere thanks are extended
To all who contributed to the
Success of this 100th Anniversary.

ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Edward Hagan, General Chairman (Faculty Retired)

Stasia Hagan

Helen McCoy Bevins '36 (Staff Retired)

Ruth Coons '40 (Faculty)

Araxi Dutton (Faculty Retired)

Helene Stevenson Farrell '39

Jacqueline Guntert (Faculty)

David Horsman '37

Robert Spickerman '36

Arlington Van Dyke '45

Doris West Van Dyke '41

Harry L. Walts (Principal Retired)

Patricia Laraway White '56

Marian Wood Zach '40

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

Harry L. Walts 1945-1967

January 17, 1984

To All Middleburgh Alumni
Wherever You May Be

Dear Friends:

This year of 1984 is a very significant year in the history of education for Middleburgh.

One hundred years ago the doors of the New Union Free School District Number 1, we think of it as the old Middleburgh grade and high school building, were opened. This school served the needs of the area excellently, but gave way to progress and mounting enrollment fifty years later when our present Central School was completed. So this year marks the anniversaries of both events. They follow a long history of the progress of education in Middleburgh – from the crude log structures of the early Church-School era to the one room school as we knew them, to an attempt at more advanced education through private academies or day-schools to the buildings which are the focal points of our celebration this year.

Middleburgh has long been known for its fine educational system which has tried to keep pace with progress but maintain quality. Sometimes this is very difficult.

An Anniversary Committee, of which I am a member, has been working on plans to celebrate these two special events. We have decided upon the dates of July 20, 21, 22, at which times we hope that hundreds of you can be with us to participate in the many class reunions and to attend the many scheduled events.

It will be a time for all to see the splendid condition of your Alma Mater; the fifty years old Central High School with its already thirty-two years old additions, and especially our quite new elementary school.

We are all proud, I am sure, of our educational heritage and I am personally pleased and very thankful to have been a part of it for many years.

I wish to thank the committee members for asking me to write this introduction.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Harry L. Walts
Supervising Principal 1945-1967

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

MIDDLEBURGH SCHOOLS 1712-1984

TODAY

To incorporate the events of the past, the constant change of today, the dreams and goals of the future, and carry the spirit and personalities of all three is a great challenge. Unlike the previous histories of our school I should like to start with 1984 and try to leave a picture of the present for those who follow, relating later the events of the past.

When one says "Middleburgh Central School" District what does he think of? The most important and only reason for its existence is the education of the student body which numbers (1983) 1100. 544 constitute the high school and 556 the elementary. A faculty of 84 teachers, 5 administrators, 3 Board Officers, 5 members of the Board of Education, a district superintendent, 15 aides, 5 secretarial staff, 8 cafeteria staff, 11 custodians, a head mechanic and assistant, and 20 bus drivers, provide not only the instruction but the many other services deemed necessary. Both elementary and high school facilities must be maintained. The 1983-84 budget to finance these services was \$4,259,520 and the proposed budget adopted by the Middleburgh Board of Education to be presented to the voters of the District for 1984-85 is \$4,673,277 a 9.7% increase while total tax levy will remain the same at \$1,579,331.

With a rising concern in the United States for better education, the 200th Anniversary of the establishment, in 1784 of the University of the State of New York and the Board of Regents, emphasis has been placed on the state wide analysis of the major issues confronting education today. Regents/Commissioner's Regional Conferences have been held over a two-year period throughout the State. Persons from all walks of life have attended as well as the academic community. The curriculum, instruction requirements, course requirements, diploma requirements, state aid, transportation aid, building aid, personnel and qualifications for instructional staff are all undergoing radical review and change. Middleburgh in Judicial District #3 has been actively involved in these ongoing discussions.

"All students must meet the Regents Competency Testing standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics (either by passing Regents Competency Tests in these skills or through other means approved by the Commission) before they are eligible to graduate." In recent tests Middleburgh students rated above the statewide average in all three areas tested. In reading 97.5% of 11th graders passed (State average 93.9%): writing 90.8% (State average 82.8%): mathematics 98.2% (State average 75.3%). These are only passing %'s not total performance comparisons. There appears to be a renewed emphasis and striving for academic excellence.

Athletic prowess, building competitive spirit, physical stamina, and teamwork, have long been a part of the school's program. Football was dropped from the 1983-84 schedule. The Girl's Soccer Team became the New York State 1983 Class C Champions, a first in our school's history.

EARLY EDUCATION IN SCHOHARIE

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

A young man or woman's beginning in Schoharie County depended upon his heritage and financial background. In the Schoharie settlements most lessons were begun early at home at the "mother's knee". The Dutch were a moderately well educated people, who came from a land where schools were plentiful for rich and poor alike. The Germans brought their teachers with them, as we find John Matthew Junck (Young) the first German school teacher in the West Camp, and he came with the settlers to Schoharie in 1740 or earlier. German teachers dominated the dorfs. However, Dutch was the language of the Vroman's Land (Fultonham). The pastor served as teacher as well as preacher. English was instituted about 1760 becoming the dominant language after the American Revolution. Some schools until that time were using English, German and Dutch; all under one teacher in the same school.

Early schools were crude and few in number with all modern conveniences lacking. The mind was the only focus. During the winter crude log dwellings were used. Heat was produced by mammoth fireplaces requiring great quantities of wood. Barns and churches became the warm weather schoolhouse. Better frame buildings began to be built; however, during the Revolution schools that had existed before, suffered the ravages of war. They, along with homes were burned during the Raid of 1780. Teachers were poorly equipped. They were boarded around and considered "poor relation" and outsiders, tolerated only because of necessity.

We find that a school exists in "Schoharry" in "August 28, 1796" from a contract signed with "Ebeazer Cross to instruct said school in the English language, six hours a day every day save Saturdays which is three hours every Saturday or six hours every other Saturday for the term of three quarters of a year from this date". For this he was paid twenty-eight dollars and one shilling. This contract is signed by Abraham Lawyer, Milbury Burghard (Burgett) and Lawrence Mattice. The list of 31 owners of the "Select School House" is attached to the document stating the shares of each and their total cost of \$342.00.

At the first meeting of the Legislature of New York after the adoption of the Constitution of 1787, Gov. DeWitt Clinton called the attention of the lawmakers to education. Two years later two lots in each township of the public State Lands were by law set apart for gospel and school purposes. Funding was almost impossible. In 1795 a grant was continued by the Assembly but rejected by the Senate. A period of recession followed until 1812 when Jedediah Peck was appointed the chairman of a commission to report on a system for the organization and establishment of common schools. The commission's recommendations were adopted and a system of common schools came into being in New York State. There were many difficulties as attendance was not compulsory, and the proud considered it as charity.

EARLY DISTRICTS

During the post-Revolutionary period opposite the then "new" Dutch Reformed Church, the Old Riverside, or little Hudson Schoolhouse was built. This schoolhouse was a comparatively large building of its type with a partition separating its two school rooms. There were two entrances on the south end. The partition was later removed and entrances replaced by windows. This school was characterized by a degree of thoroughness and instruction in some of the higher branches of learning, causing students from some distance to enroll. For many years

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

after discontinuance of its use this building became the carriage house for J. M. Scribner and in 1946 it was moved further north on Middle Fort Road where it was enlarged and became the Middle Fort Rest Home. This was District School No. 4. A "Programme" is at hand for the Exhibition at the Reformed Dutch Church of District-School No. Four, March 29, 1855 and contains a most interesting program, poems, resolutions and a "Catalogue of the Names" of the Trustees and Students. The teacher was George Coonley. Trustees were David Zeh, Nicholas Beekman, Alexander Bouck. Advisory Committee was Margaret I. Scribner, Mary P. B. Spafford, Sarah J. Chase, Juliette Van Dycke, Mary D. Wells.

The committee on Resolutions was George W. Zeh, Laurent D. Wells, Duryee Beekman, Roger D. Wells, Charles W. Mann, Harvey D. Hinman, Charles L. Sanford. 81 female and 100 male scholars are listed among whom are: George L. Danforth, John Scribner, Edward P. Rosseter, John P. Bellinger, Addison Cornwell, Walter Shufelt, Peter Borst, William H. Albro, Lansing Clark, Caroline Bouck, Elizabeth Bouck, Helen Vroman-Gilbert, Emma Beekman, Amelia Vroman, Cornelia Van Dycke, Cora Watson, Elizabeth Efner, Helen E. Hinman.

As Upper Main Street was developed after the Revolution a schoolhouse for the Bull's Head Section was built at the corner of Main St. and Huntersland Road. Today this schoolhouse still stands on the original site although it is greatly altered in appearance and structure. At one time the Methodist Church Society met there prior to the building of their first edifice in 1834.

Across the Schoharie Valley from Vromans Nose (Onistagrawa) dwelt the Mohegan Indians under the mountain known as "Mohegonter". Stretching between this area and the early settlement of Weiser's Dorf were great fields of wild clover. The trail, well-worn, between this settlement and that of the Indians became known to the Dutch Settlers as the Clauverwy (Clover Way - Clauverwie). A school was built in this district on the land owned by Abraham Lawyer and divided between his three heirs: Nancy Haines, Eve Reddick, and Maria Stanton. The schoolhouse stood on the property inherited by Eve Reddick, today owned by Nahrwolds. A map was at one time in the possession of the late John Nahrwold showing the location of this building in 1841. The building was moved to the village of Middleburgh about 1900 and is the building owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Lawyer on Maple Avenue.

The Town of Middleburgh minutes of 1833-37 relate much as to the establishment of School Districts, who the commissioners were and how areas continued to be redistricted and renumbered until July 22, 1937 when 21 districts were in existence.

In 1852 the Episcopal Church held services in Middleburgh and in 1855 erected an Episcopal Chapel to be used for religious worship as a select school. This school ceased to function just prior to 1882 and today the building is the home of Timothy Murphy Post of the American Legion. Another school of this type was opened in 1878 on Railroad Avenue in the Martin Building (today-apartment house owned by John Bingham) and was known as Charlouise Institute. Instruction was given in music, the languages and classics. Financial difficulties developed and the school ceased to exist about 1881.

UNION FREE SCHOOL

With the disappearance of the select school and the district school becoming inadequate, a need was felt for a Union Free School. In December 1882 George E. Borst, realizing this need, called the first meeting of Middleburgh's citizens. Mr. Borst acted as secretary and William H.

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

Engle as chairman. The two village districts: No. 4 Old Riverside School, No. 8 Bull's Head District and No. 7 the Clauverwie District were to compose the new Union Free School. A lot was selected at the corner of Main and Clauverwie and specifications were obtained. The plans of C. C. Nichols, architect of Albany, were accepted. Mr. William H. Albro was elected President of the Board of Education. Bonds were sold; contracts let on May 21, 1884 and three days later ground breaking took place. The old stone building constructed near the middle of the 18th century and occupied by Lieut. Col. Zielie, rifleman, defender of the Middle Fort and compatriot of Timothy Murphy was razed to make place for the new school.

The new red brick building was a most impressive structure. Its cupola stood strong and straight at the top of three stories overlooking its slate roof. The building itself, complete cost about \$17,000. Two furnaces and furniture cost another \$3,000. The first and second floors were equally divided by a main hall passing from the front to the rear entrance with two rooms each side. Two flights of stairs led from the first floor to the top story, which in the beginning was devoted in its entirety to a public hall and chapel, and was said to "the most commodious in the county."

The building admirably arranged, supplied with modern furniture, and well heated and ventilated. The library and its furnishing was one of the most important parts of the new school. Nearly a thousand volumes were carefully selected, representing nearly every department of literature, science and art. There was a full collection of the latest maps, charts and globe, a tellurian and a physiological manikin. The physical and chemical apparatus were of the highest calibre.

Middleburgh High School or Middleburgh Academy, organized in 1883 was recognized as one of the finest schools of its kind. John Kelley served as its first principal. School newspapers were published. Athletic teams were organized. Literary societies, spelling bees and a debating club were well supported. Large delegations of parents and taxpayers regularly visited the school and gave their support to the excellent faculty and students. Middleburgh was proud of its high scholastic record and the success of its graduates, many entering the professions. Non-resident pupils in 1896-7 were charged a tuition of \$12-primary, \$18-intermediate and grammar; \$21-academic. Total enrollment was 323. 71 were in the Academic Department. The faculty numbered seven. 360 pupils graduated from this building over the 50 years and 122 teachers served on its faculty.

A one-year Training Class for certification (valid as long as they wished to teach) of teachers was organized in 1900 by Silas Kimm. The school faculty held regular classes of instruction and the student teachers were trained through observation of the various grades. To qualify for entrance to this program they had to have a "Third Grade Teachers Certificate" which was a renewable permit granted by the district superintendent or a Regents Preliminary Certificate with 14 additional academic counts. If they did not have these credits they could obtain them by attending Summer School. Later Silas Kimm became greatly involved in the centralization movement in the State.

CENTRALIZATION

About 1927 the State of New York became interested in centralizing the many school districts. Schoharie County was canvassed and in January 1931 petitions asking for

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

establishment of a central school in Middleburgh were filed with the State Education Department. Many local citizens spent many hours of study and labor to propose the union of 23 common school districts. On April 3, 1931 with 730 voters centralization was approved 560 to 169. April 21, 1931 William F. Spencer was elected Superintendent of Schools of the second supervisory district defeating L. R. Bowdish and Olin Bouck.

May 5th papers for the establishment of the new central school were filed with the State Education Department. July 24th a budget was adopted and authorized loans and purchase of buses were approved by the voters of the districts. A. F. Gilbert of New York City was hired as the architect October 1931. Bond issue of \$290,000 was sold through George B. Gibbons and Co. of NY on October 31, 1932. Construction began in November.

With 29 districts united, Middleburgh Central School District became the largest centralized district in New York State. Six hundred forty-seven students arrived Sept. 6, 1932 at the old building; 200 having arrived in the new green and white buses. Nearby houses and apartments had been converted into classrooms. The new building was opened for students September 18, 1933. The old building was razed beginning July 5, 1933 and made way for the construction of the new auditorium. Its first class was graduated June 1934, John W. Bouck, president of the Board of Education in 1962, was a member of that class.

April 6, 1934 the beautiful colonial building was complete and dedication ceremonies were held. District Superintendent William F. Spencer presided. After several numbers by the newly organized school orchestra under the direction of V. Weltie Baker, the Rev. William R. Buitendorp invoked the divine blessing. President of the Board of Education, Caryl W. Bulson welcomed the many in attendance. Principal Ralph F. Pyle, Dr. William L. Thompson, a Rent of the University of the State of New York; Arthur U. Stevenson, local historian; A. F. Gilbert, architect, and Dr. C.S. Best, all had a part in the ceremonies. Dedication address was given by Ray P. Snyder, chief of Rural Education Division of the State Dept. of Education. The new band closed the ceremony. Middleburgh's citizens were proud of the beauty created and their investment in the future.

In its first year of operation \$64,147 was received in public monies. Thirty-three teachers were employed with twenty in the Middleburgh building and 13 in one-room schools still operating. The closing of West Fulton School in 1957 brought an end to the last of the one-room schools of the original centralization. Preston Hollow joined the district in 1952 and ceased to operate in 1964.

Under succeeding principals, Dr. Stewart H. Smith 1934-1945, Harry L. Walts 1945-1967, Thomas Mickle 1967-1969 and Lawrence Paser 1969-1983 many additional services were adopted.

In 1935 departments of agriculture and homemaking were opened and a physical education teacher employed. Industrial arts was introduced 1937. A garage was built to house thirteen buses and a well equipped work-repair shop. In 1939 an elementary vocal music department and special class were added. A Guidance department was introduced. Driver Education was added in 1949 and a fulltime dental hygienist and girls' physical education instructor joined the staff. Departments were enlarged and in 1956 a full-time remedial reading g teacher began work with the grades.

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

1949 found the original building greatly overcrowded with an enrollment of 820 and a faculty of 42, necessitating the building of an addition completed in 1952. This year also found the institution of kindergarten.

The National Honor Society, school paper, the yearbook, band, commercial contests, Washington trips, cheerleading, tennis, debating. FFA Empire and National Awards, Athletic Awards, Yorkers Club, Public speaking, Boy's State, 1955 championship basketball, soccer, baseball, track teams, football, music awards, photography club, proms, plays and many others deserve recognition, although scholarship must come first.

In 1959 Mrs. Winthrop Ames Sr. (Margaret) became the first woman elected to Middleburgh's Board of Education where she served with distinction until 1974. Today three women: Mrs. Mary Ellen Coons, Mrs. Lillian Sidney, and Mrs. Patricia Cleary are members of the five member board. Mrs. Theresa Youmans, Mrs. Axari Dutton, Mrs. Ruth McGiver and Mrs. Janet Mayer have served. In 1975 the district petitioned and adopted the resolution to have a nine member board. In 1980 it was voted to return to a five member board as the terms expired.

BOCES

1960 the Board of Cooperative Educational Services was formed with Albany, Schenectady and Schoharie counties to provide programs for students who wished to enter the job market upon graduation. In 1967 classes were held in the Dawson Wright Garage in Schoharie and an introduction to vocational training as made in Schoharie County. 1200 to 1500 attended the open house in 1968 when the new Occupational Center was opened in Middleburgh (today Van Dyke Motors and the Grand Union). At that time members of BOCES were Reginald Clay, Richmondville, president; John H. Fink, district superintendent; Victor C. Fila, director, area occupational center; Harry Walts (recently retired principal of Middleburgh Central School), assistant director of the center and Milton J. Meyers, guidance coordinator. 208 students were enrolled and six programs were in effect: auto mechanics, agricultural mechanization, building trades, business machines, cosmetology, and nurses aide. Others were to follow. The 1970 rental was \$34,000 and in 1971 it was voted to secure acreage in Schoharie and build a modern facility at a cost of \$1,080,000. Ground was broken December 1970 and the facility was to open 1973. Programs have been enlarged and students are bused from the surrounding areas, until today Middleburgh's support constitutes a large budgetary item.

PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION

In 1958 the State of New York urged greater consolidation throughout the area. This effort was increased in 1969 as classrooms were becoming crowded. The projected plan to unite all five districts in Schoharie County under one district failed and a second proposal for a Middleburgh-Schoharie merger was proposed and defeated by vote.

ENROLLMENT INCREASE

Robert Marsh, Vice-Principal, much loved by his students and the community died suddenly in 1963. An elementary principalship was established and Thomas Mickle was hired.

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

Upon Mr. Walts' retirement in 1967, Thomas Mickle became Supervising Principal. In 1969 Mr. Mickle left Middleburgh to become Supervising Principal at Canajoharie. James Davis was acting Principal for three weeks until Lawrence Paser filled the position. With a rising school population from 977 students in 1965 to 1084 in 1969, 1146 in 1970 and 1241 in 1971 space was at a premium. A Space Advisory Committee was established in 1970 which eventually became the Building Committee. In 1970 four first grade and two second grade classes were held in the Friary on Route 145 (today Parotti's Adult Home) a mile distant from the school. The kindergarten held four half day sessions in a Ft. Wayne mobile classroom on the school property. 1972 enrollment reached 1261. Six mobile classrooms were rented for three years at a cost of \$20,000 per year. Placing them on the tennis courts led to the courts' destruction which necessitated rebuilding and resurfacing through public subscription in 1980.

NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDING

In 1973 the District voters decided to build a new elementary building on the Harold and Ruth Coons' property with an entrance to be on South Main Street. Seventy-three and one tenth per cent of the \$1,850,000 was to be state aid. January 29th 1975 classes moved into the building although the contract was not completed. With two facilities it was necessary to increase service and instructional personnel.

Dedication ceremonies of the modern, one story brick building were held May 7, 1975. It held 26 open classrooms K-6, plus BOCES special class, which formerly met in village church facilities, a gymnasium with lockers and showers for both boys and girls, kitchen and cafeteria, a large resource center (library), music resources center, art, science, music rooms, offices, a teachers' lounge and storage rooms

King & King of Syracuse were the architects; director, Russell Goodin; Coordinator, Kent Russell; Building Design, Tae Jin Chun; Sweet Associates, Inc., General Contractor; Levi Case Co. Inc., Heating & Air Conditioning; Spring-Schmalz Corp., Plumbing; Liberty Electric Co. Inc., Electric. Elementary Band under direction of Russell Ryan, and the Elementary Choir under the direction of Mrs. Edward Guntert furnished music for the ceremonies. Members of the Board of Education were: Dr. B. Wesley Andrew, President; John Whitbeck, Vice-President; Ruth McGiver, Albert Masick. Mary Ellen Coons, Theresa Youmans, Kenneth Wood, James Preston, Gary Hayes. Administration: Dr. George Maybury, District Superintendent; Lawrence H. Paser, Supervising Principal; Joseph J. Galotta, Administrative Assistant; F. Baker Hague, Elementary Principal; Student Council President, Meike Weyrauch.

The student enrollment reached a high of 1262 (668 elementary, 594 high school). The two facilities were fully functioning. The school population now began to decrease until 1982-83 shows a total of 1100 (556 in the elementary, 544 in high school), a reduction of 162 pupils in three years. With the high school in need of renovation and inflation becoming greater, budget after budget was rejected resulting in several years of austerity budgets. Music, library and athletics were all threatened. A community booster club was formed to support these activities and gradually they again became a part of the adopted budget.

FACULTY – COMMUNITY

The following information was reproduced from the

ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK 1984

During the past forty years there has been a tremendous change from the single female teacher or the male teacher who whose spouse devoted her time to her home and the community. Employment of married couples in the same facility was prohibited. In today's rapidly changing world the teacher must not only instruct and prepare lesson plans adapting to methods and technology requiring continuing education with the student relationship foremost I mind, but must interrelate with the community under whose magnifying glass he or she is, and should be, constantly scrutinized. "Job security" has brought increased demands and concerns with tenure, unions, administration, working parents, legislation and family financing. With the economic and social problems the good teacher often becomes discouraged and is lost to the profession.

Middleburgh has long been proud of its many teachers and their influence upon the youth and the community. The teacher's devotion to his profession and his desire to serve were, and remain the prerequisites for his happiness and success. Teachers play the greatest part in the judging of the quality of education. The tangible facilities, band or athletic teams representing the school look impressive, but the teacher appears pretty unglamorous to the average citizen. One is paid to do one's job and expected to fulfill all obligations. One is known only by the example set or the result of labor many years after planting the seed. The life long influence has left its mark upon the mind and heart of the child before it is visible to the public or parental eye.

Of equal importance is the responsibility of parent and the board of education in choosing the proper teacher and in cooperation with the teacher to develop the greatest potential of the teacher and child for a successful education. It is said that, "A school is the reflection of the community."; however, a community is also a reflection of the school whose tremendous influence can change a community. That it be a cooperative venture is most important.

Also it must be remembered that the responsibility of administration of education is tremendous. The Board of Education must, with the Superintendent (title change from Supervising Principal in 1977) present the ever growing budget, confer in the procurement and release of teachers, ever taking into consideration the needs and desires of the parent, student, teacher, and district voter, and make vital decisions governed by, and meeting the jurisdiction and requirements of the New York State Education Department.

Time and space do not allow for the mention of each of the 122 teachers during the fifty years before centralization and 480 during the fifty years since. Each contributed of oneself within one's sphere in influence. Each was and remains a personality. All were, and are, important to those 3264 graduates and the community.

There are too many pictures in this 1984 Book to reproduce.

There are eighteen pages listing the graduates from 1886 to 1983 and the Senior Class 1984 in the Anniversary Book.
