

2009 ANNIVERSARY BOOK

125th Anniversary

Union Free School District

The first graduating class was in 1886.



75th Anniversary

of the completion of the Middleburgh Central School Building

The Dedication was on Friday, April 6, 1934.

The 2009 ANNIVERSARY BOOK

We have reproduced the last three Anniversary Books which were printed in 1944, 1959 and 1984; as well as some current information. These books contain the history of our school and how it came to be built. The committee members thought it was important to share this information once again.

We know that this book has many things that could have been written between 1984 and 2009, but due to the short time the committee had to create this book, it was impossible to do all of the research. Some of the information lacking is a list of summer graduates. Our aim is to complete this history for future printings, including the many renovation projects at the schools.

Any corrections or contributions to this book can be made by contacting the M.C.S. Alumni Association for future publications.

A special thank you to Helene Stevenson Andrew Farrell '39 for her contributions.

A sincere thanks to the proofreaders: Patricia Laraway White '56, Jeremy Lindemann '06 and Carolyn McCoy Becker '63 for their many hours of reading.

And thank you to anyone who may have in any way contributed to the success of this 2009 Anniversary Book.

Anniversary Book Committee

Cherie Beadling Clapper '50

Ronald Smith '61

Nancy Ann Armlin Wolfe '74

2009 ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK

October 1, 2009

To All of the Middleburgh Central School Alumni and Friends:

How proud I am to have been asked to write the introduction for this handbook, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Middleburgh Central School. This school has always been an important part of my life for the past 68 years – including being a full time teacher for 36 memorable years and a substitute for 33 additional years. Many of you enjoying this weekend were a joy to have in my classroom.

The committee in charge of this historic anniversary has worked diligently to prepare for this special weekend. It is hoped that each of you will attend and enjoy many of the scheduled events.

The present school was the combining of many surrounding one room school houses. It covers the largest central school district (area-wise) in all of New York State. A picture of our school was the only central school, in all of New York State, to be shown in the early 1940's seventh grade social studies text book. It was chosen because of its exquisite architecture and natural physical surroundings.

Centralization broadened the educational and social opportunities for both students and adults in the entire central school community.

Like all changes, under the name of progress, our school has had its share of ups and downs. After 75 years of educating the young people of this school district, the physical repairs needed for these magnificent buildings have been in dire need of many improvements, which are finally being made at a slow but steady pace.

Many fine young men and women, who were educated and graduated from this Alma Mater, have given much to others because of the many superior, outstanding and dedicated teachers who touched their lives.

Past graduates from Middleburgh Central School have entered many professions – to mention a few – medical research, engineering, dentistry, lawyers, doctors, teaching, nursing and the ministry.

All four seasons in this beautiful Schoharie Valley continues to give each one of us phenomenal beauty from God's paintbrush.

My blessings to each one of you,

Araxi Dutton Palmer

A FEW SHARED MEMORIES

It is the fall of 2009 and Middleburgh's annual Fall Festival on Columbus Day weekend will be in progress; and this year, another special touch is being added. The celebration of the Middleburgh schools – 125 years since the Union Free School District #1 was formed and the 75th anniversary of our present central school.

The Reunion Committee's research has found that a local resident is one of the oldest graduates. She is Jessie VanAller Bartholomew. She was born on September 30th, 1912 to Fred and Laura VanAller.

At six years old, she started school at the Union Free School on the corner of Main Street and Clauverwie. It was a mile and half walk and she still remembers how heavy the books were. In bad weather, her father would take them with horses.

The school had no frills but did have a well rounded academic course. Jessie spent all twelve years there and graduated in 1930, along with fourteen others. Her education became useful later in life as she did all the bookwork for her husband, George, in his cattle auction and sales. She is proud that in the eighth grade, she won the spelling bee. Jessie then advanced to Schoharie and although she didn't place first, she scored in the high nineties. She still likes to read and is well versed in what's going on in the world.

Education has continued to play a role in her life. Her grandson, Robert Roney, was a member of the Board of Education in recent years. She also has a granddaughter, Joyce Roney, who is a teacher at our present Alma Mater. Others in the family have gone on to pursue higher education after graduating from Middleburgh. Our hats are off to Jessie and her family.

Interview by Pauline Reinhart Mercer '51

The class of 1950 was a close knit group of twenty-five that made history in school and later. Of the first grade nine, six of us are still going strong, or at least going.

When it was time for our Senior trip there was consternation in the school administration. One of our members (our school Mayor) was black. In D.C. at that time discrimination was total. We said we were going and he was going with us and we did! We were fighting for our civil rights long before it was fashionable.

In 1975 we had our first real reunion, a weekend family affair with over 70 present. It evolved into a travel club going to wherever a classmate invited us, in state or out, on land or water. By 1990 we returned to the area at the Oak Hill Ski Lodge (owned by a classmate's brother), and continued our weekend reunions until two years ago. Time has taken its toll on us. Meanwhile, we started the multi-class reunions.

We also started and after many years completed the Gold Dome Restoration Project to which many of you contributed. We are justifiably proud of this.

At a mini reunion recently, it was agreed that MCS played a powerful role in equipping us to succeed in the many various paths we followed.

By Charlene Newhouse LaMountain '50 &
Abby Weller Herring '50

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A FEW SHARED MEMORIES

My wife and I had recently graduated from Ithaca College. We both had been in the Music Department and received a phone call from the Dean of the department. Dr. Rebmann said he was calling to tell me that he had just talked with the Principal of the Middleburgh Central School and had been told that he urgently needed a music teacher to take the place of the person leaving the position. His further comment was, "I am giving you an unlimited recommendation and I want you to take the job." After speaking with Dr. Stewart H. Smith, I took the job over the phone. I was to meet Dr. Smith after arriving in Middleburgh.

Well, what to do now? I had to find a map and locate where Middleburgh was. We finally were on our way to Middleburgh. It was December and the temperature was 20 degrees below zero. Driving was treacherous, my brakes were freezing, and we finally got to Cobleskill and decided to stay there over night.

The next morning we arrived in Middleburgh. I naturally wondered what the school would look like. I was delighted to see that the building was beautiful and saw a most beautiful dome shining in gold leaf. I knew then I really would like MCS.

I was fortunate enough to have a wonderful teaching career. The Principal, the teachers, the students and the parents were wonderful to work with. I was able to develop a Grade Band, a Junior Band and an exciting Senior Concert Band. I was able to experience the true joy of teaching instruments to students from 4th to 12th grades. I was given the enjoyable work for 36½ years and was privileged to conduct my bands and some County organizations.

I have had the privilege to work with the class of '50 on the planned painting of the dome that I mentioned earlier. All the time I was teaching, I was aware of the loss of brightness to the dome. It has been such a thrill to see the recent painting of the dome and I will always remember that first impression of the special top that has now

returned. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT WHICH HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED.

Chet Dickerson

For thirty-six years I was a member of the Middleburgh Central School faculty. This is my thirty-third year of retirement but I still substitute teach for two very special teachers. I'm so glad I taught in the Golden Years of Teaching when one could really teach and have fun too.

I have enjoyed eleven cruises, traveled in all fifty states, the West Indies, Europe, and have spent eighteen winters in Mesa, Arizona. Now I live in Middleburgh the year around.

I have had two wonderful husbands – H. Charles Dutton for forty-six years and John E. Palmer for ten years – both from Middleburgh.

My book Triumph From Tragedy was published in 1997 – an absolutely true life story about World War I that should never be erased from history. I am one of the still living survivors of that genocide.

My daughter, Joyce Dutton Cooper, and her family live in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Joyce was an elementary principal there and retired in 2008.

I have three grandchildren – John, William, and Emilie and one great grandson, Liam.

For sixty-eight years this Schoharie Valley has been my home. To me there is no place more beautiful.

Araxi Hubbard Dutton Palmer

THE DOME

When the Middleburgh Central School was built in 1934 it featured a magnificent dome covered with gold leaf. It was known as the “school with the golden dome”. By 1950 the dome had lost its sheen. A building expansion project was planned and A.F. Gilbert, the architect who designed the original school, offered to replace the gold leaf. Mr. Wilson of Cobleskill was hired to apply the gold leaf. He was paid \$500.

In the early 80’s the dome no longer glowed. Rick Hartman restored the dome with gold paint. That application did not withstand the elements and by the late 90’s the dome looked deplorable.

In 1997 the Class of 1950 approached the MCS School Board offering to spearhead a project to restore the dome once again. The project was approved, the class formed an association and efforts began to raise funds. After years of planning, fundraising and waits, it was decided not to use gold leaf as its cost had risen and research showed that there were more durable and longer lasting methods. On the advice of Don Sheehan, (Dusty Don’s), an expert in auto restoration, an automotive grade custom mixed paint was selected. In addition to the paint application on the dome, a railing, similar to the original, was constructed and mounted by Ben Rothrock of Rothrock Enterprises.

Finally, in July of 2008 the Dome Shines Again.

It must be recorded that the project could not have succeeded without the donations from the community, the businesses and the individuals who encouraged the Class of 1950 with both money and moral support.

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BOCES

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) were created by the New York State Legislature in 1948, with each BOCES region referred to as a Supervisory District led by a District Superintendent. Today there are 37 BOCES encompassing 712 districts in the state.

The Capital Region BOCES Schoharie Vo-Tec Center (now known as the Capital Region BOCES Career & Technical Schoharie, Schoharie Campus), was built in 1973 on Route 30A, at a cost of \$1,080,000.

At the Schoharie Career & Tech Center, students have an opportunity to explore a career before entering college, enrolling in a technical school or joining the general workforce. It puts them on the fast track to a satisfying career. It allows students to get a head start on college and save money at the same time. It helps students to see what may lie ahead, while demonstrating the value of lifelong learning. Students who successfully complete the program earn four credits per year and are awarded a certificate.

Over the years there have been a variety of programs offered. At the present time the Career and Technical Educations Programs include Agricultural & Natural Resources (Equipment Operation/Landscaping), Construction (Building & Grounds Maintenance, Residential & Commercial Construction/Heavy Equipment), Hospitality & Tourism (Culinary Arts), Human Services (Cosmetology), Legal & Protective Services (Criminal Justice), and Transportation (automotive Trades Technology).

The enrollment today, which totals 188, includes high school students from Berne-Know Westerlo, Cobleskill-Richmondville, Duanesburg, Middleburgh, Mohonasen, Schalmont, Schoharie, Schenectady, and Sharon Springs.

Raymond Paglieri has been principal for four years. Since April 2009, Denise Capece has been acting principal. The teaching staff ranges about 15 at any one time.

2009 ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK

ADDITIONS / RENOVATIONS

As we had one of the most modern Elementary School facilities, in the area, attention was called for the need to update the High School. A Building Advisory Committee was named to assess the needs. During 1986, soil tests showed a potential problem and could raise the cost by thousands of dollars after test boring of soil relevant to the proposed renovation and addition project. Also in 1986 an entirely separate project was the removal of asbestos and replacing it with insulation with an estimated cost of \$200,000. A figure of \$2.3 million was awarded on March 25, 1987 for a bonding contract. Between the defeats of proposed projects, some proposed renovations and additions were approved. We have an elevator, renovated auditorium, girls and boys lockers, library updates, interior ramps, science laboratories, kitchen storage area, roof repairs, fire alarm improvements, and a fire rated enclosure for the boiler room to name a few.

Property (9.7 acres) at a cost of \$145,900. was purchased in 2000 on Upper Main Street. A new bus garage was built with the old bus garage used as expanded office space. District offices were relocated to this location as well.

Approved in March 2007, renovations to the Middleburgh Middle/High School building began in the summer of 2009. Most of the renovations and reconstruction projects are for the Middle/High School but the Elementary School will see improvements to security and handicap accessibility. This project will ensure the safety, health and the technology resources. A 2,850 square foot addition, on the ground level, at the rear of the high school building, will increase the cafeteria and a teacher's workroom has been made to the new addition. Thus the cafeteria has more space. The steps and pillars on the front of the High School will be repaired. Total completion of the project will be January or February 2010.