

The Sarah Tyng Winslow Schoolhouse



Sarah Tyng Winslow came from a prominent Tyngsborough family, being the daughter of Sarah Tyng and Eleazer Tyng Esq. Her father, Eleazer, was justice of the peace, colonel of the militia, and selectman. Born in 1690, he lived for 92 years. It is in honor of this family, the town now is called Tyngsborough.

Sarah Tyng Winslow was a true liberal benefactor. In 1789, she gave a considerable amount of money to the church as well as for a “convenient house for a grammar school.” The school was built on Great Road (now Middlesex Road) right in what was then the center of town. Unfortunately, she died October 29, 1791, only a year after the school was built.

The original school was square and had a sloping floor to an aisle which led to the teacher’s desk. A dropped pencil or an apple would roll down and be spotted by the teacher.

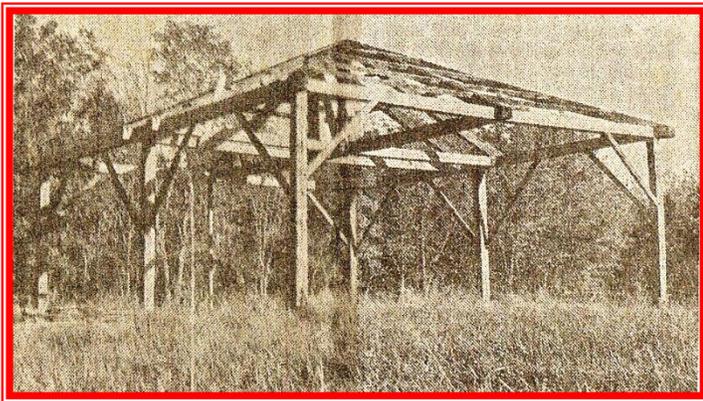
It stayed that way until 1830. The teacher’s desk was built two steps above the floor and looked like a pulpit. Boys and girls were seated separately on each side of the room. The new school did not replace any of the existing schools, but offered advanced courses in Latin, Greek, French, Algebra, and so on, to ambitious students.

In 1798, the building burnt, but it was rebuilt the same year. In 1810, Captain Farwell had it moved further up the road to behind the Unitarian Church and near the corner of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road. Here it served two generations of Tyngsborough pupils until 1864 when the town purchased the old Baptist Church on Kendall Road (later the old Town Hall) and converted it into a school.

After 1864, the building was used for storage, odds and ends, and at one point as a garage. In the 1960’s, Mr. Wilbur Farrow owned the land as well as a store on the corner of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road. He needed the land to enlarge the parking and expressed a desire to donate the old school building to the Tyngsborough-Dunstable Historical Society.

Mrs. Margaret Larter of Dunstable was willing to donate the four-acre field on Main Street in Dunstable, close to the Tyngsborough town line and where the old Town Pound was, as a new site. Ground was broken in June 1968. Ted Larter, Margaret’s son, with Catherine Lambert of Tyngsborough, took it upon himself to oversee the operation.

The Schoolhouse was disassembled and moved. After spending a winter in Ted’s barn, the work started in the spring. It was done on a very limited budget and with the help of many volunteers. Within two years, we had a building the way it looks today.



The beginning structure takes shape.



Providing muscle for restoration is Frank Hanchett and Leo Dumont.

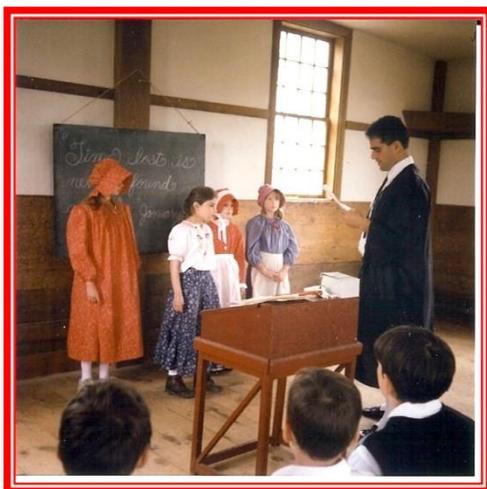


Since the restoration, the Schoolhouse has been the home of the Tyngsborough-Dunstable Historical Society (TDHS). Regular meetings of the Society are held here as well as Christmas parties and get-together activities.

Annual events at the Schoolhouse include the Steam and Gas Engine Meet in May, the Strawberry Festival in June, and the Antique Auto Club of America Bean Pot Region Little Red Schoolhouse Car Meet in October.

The Schoolhouse is also available to the town people for parties, weddings, and workshops.

Strawberry Festival volunteers are ready to serve up homemade strawberry shortcake.



The historical society hosts many other events at the Schoolhouse for the surrounding communities to enjoy.

Check the Tyngsborough-Dunstable Historical Society website (www.tdhistoricalsociety.org) for updates to its calendar of events.

The Sara Tyng Winslow Schoolhouse is now fondly referred to as the Little Red Schoolhouse.

We believe Sarah Tyng Winslow would be very pleased if she knew how much enjoyment she has given to so many generations with her original gift in 1790.

Students dress the part and participate in school activities of a different time in history.



THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

Old schoolhouse stands in the green field
Red, fresh and neat.

Grass trimmed, stone wall.

Whiff of smoke winding on high
From wood stove --- hot!

One room large, with wide plank floors.

Bell tower rope hanging.

Begging to be tugged.

Walls hold photos of yesterday.

Benches and chairs fill the room

But are empty, waiting

For the children of the village.

R.W. Provencher

Town Pound and Schoolhouse

Photo by Curt Gates