

# Reminiscence: Cilleyville School

In his e-mail from his home in California, Harold says that this reminiscence was inspired by reading in the Beacon that the 2011 Andover Historical Society calendar features Andover's old schoolhouses. (See ad below.)

By Harold Crane  
For the Beacon

My sister, brother, and I were all "Cilleyville Kids" – alumni of the old one-room Cilleyville School up on the old Highway 11 [now Cilleyville Road], just across the highway from the Bog, the Blackwater River, and the old Bog Bridge. Collectively our years there encompassed those from 1935 through 1947.

The old school closed in 1948, subsequently sold to a private party, and remodeled into an attractive private residence – where it remains as such today, with a silhouette so drastically different from when it closed that an unknowing passerby would never imagine that it was once a school.

The old school, as I remember it, consisted of the one main classroom, perhaps 40' square with high ceilings and solid rows of windows on three sides, abutted by an entry foyer and a woodshed. The entry foyer included the one and only entrance/exit door to the building. It was a tiny hall-like room with hooks where outer clothing was hung and with three

inner doors, one leading to the classroom, another to the woodshed, and the third to the girls toilet. The boys toilet was located in the woodshed.

There was no heat in the structure other than the little square cast iron stove located at the rear of the classroom; seemingly no insulation; and no running water. The only furniture was the students' desks, perhaps two dozen in total; one large teacher's desk; and an old piano.

I started there in 1937, my sister in 1935, and our younger brother in 1939. We graduated in 1945, 1943, and 1947 respectively. I was the janitor there from about my fourth grade until I graduated. I was paid \$3 per month. School hours were from 8 AM to 3:30 PM, but my day as janitor started at 6:30 AM to start the fire in time for the building to warm before classes began, and ended about 4 PM after bringing in the flag, cleaning the blackboard, and emptying the water jug so that it would not freeze overnight.

Winters in New Hampshire were very cold then, usually below zero from early December through mid-March, quite often reaching 30 below or more overnight and thus sub-zero temperatures inside

the old building at 6:30 in the morning. I learned to keep warm by splitting kindling and firewood and stacking enough firewood to last for the day next to the stove in the classroom, shoveling paths when snow fell so that others could get to the front door, sweeping, dusting, and cleaning both of the old one-hole toilets.



The Andover Historical Society has relatively few photos of the Cilleyville schoolhouse on the southwest corner of Kearsarge Mountain Road and Cilleyville Road. This one, which probably dates from around the time that Harold is recalling, was taken from the driveway of Richard Powers' house and shows Mount Kearsarge in the distance and the old American Legion Hall on the left.

I remember vividly one occasion when the outside temperature reached an unusually cold 50 below overnight. I had walked to school and was just starting the fires when a couple of the local men who lived nearby barged in to see if I was OK. Of course I was, but they determined that it was too cold for me to be there and hustled me across the road to our teacher's house where, for the rest of the winter, every day after the schoolhouse fire was started I would cross the highway to baby sit her two young sons while she made breakfast and packed lunch for her husband.

The unusual cold snap lasted for

three days but did not cause classes to be cancelled. In fact, I do not recall school ever being cancelled for weather. We New Englanders were a pretty hardy bunch back then.

Sometimes, my fires failed to warm the old building by class time, and classes began with our coats on and all our desks pulled up to the galvanized sheet metal enclosure which surrounded the stove. The enclosure was there for purposes of radiating heat throughout the rest of the room and to keep anyone from bumping into the stove as they passed by. It also served as the dryer for wet coats and mittens draped over it when we came in from wet recess and lunch periods.

As for school itself:

Total enrollment at any given time was never more than 12 or 15 students, which encompassed all of the eight grades, though not all grades were occupied every year. Teachers that I remember were Annie Thompson from Wilmot, Adelle Glaubit of Andover, and Ruth Emerson, who lived just across the highway there in Cilleyville; all in different years, but daily routines were always the same.

Our class days always began with our heads lowered to our desks as we recited the Lord's Prayer. Then we stood and with hands over our hearts we pledged allegiance to the flag, complete with the words "under God." And then, still standing, we would sing *The Star-Spangled Banner*, and we knew all the words. Sometimes we sang *America*, or *America The Beautiful*, or *God Bless America*, and we knew all of those words as well. Then, when our songs were finished, I would proudly march to the front of the room to carry the flag outside and posi-

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