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Dyers Crossing from page 19

ing distance of my house, was producing musical instruments in their home!

Dyers Crossing Road

Even though Dyers Crossing Road was laid out as early as 1801, there are still only a few houses on it. Probably the road was cut through the woods and fields of area farmers, who retained ownership of their land for a long period of time.

Eventually, in the 1900s, a few pieces of land were sold, and gradually over the years houses were built. (Since these houses were built during the twentieth century, and not by early settlers, I have decided not to write about them in this article.)

Probably the building on Dyers Crossing Road which is remembered the most is the Dyers Crossing Schoolhouse. It was built in 1884 and combined the Emery Road school district on Marston Hill with the Back Road school district. Both of these school buildings were reported to have been in deplorable condition

The new school was built on land donated by Carlos Tilton, who was the previous owner of the Guy and Nannie Hersey farm (my grandparents). The building was located at the four-way intersection of today's Route 11 and Dyers Crossing Road, in the southwestern corner. A few of the rocks upon which it sat can still be seen.

The Dyers Crossing School and my family had a connection which spanned three generations and lasted for 50 years. My grandmother attended this school, as did my mother, her four siblings, and many of their cousins. My brother and my five sisters attended school there until it was closed in 1945. The students were then transported to East Andover Village as the town continued to consolidate its many schools.

Unfortunately, Dyers Crossing School closed a year before I was old enough to begin school. Thus, I was

the only member of my family (along with my father) not to have attended. I have always felt a little sad about this – as if I had missed something, or had been left out of an interesting and unique experience – one shared by everyone in my family, except for me!

My sister, Helen LaPlante Duchesne, in her book *In Their Time*, devoted a chapter to the Dyers Crossing School, which she attended for eight years. Her book is an interesting read and sheds light on what life was like growing up in East Andover in the first half of the 20th century. Helen donated the copyrights to her book to the Andover Historical Society. If interested, it can be obtained there.

In 1945, World War II came to a close. Area servicemen and women were returning home, getting married, and looking for housing. One of these returning veterans was my uncle, Ray Hersey, who was a Purple Heart recipient. Seriously wounded while fighting in the Pacific, he spent several months recuperating in a New York hospital before returning home and marrying in the fall of 1945.

Like all Americans, he dreamed of owning his own home, and plans were begun to make this happen. His parents were now the owners of the empty Dyers Crossing School, and they had plenty of land.

Unfortunately, the schoolhouse was small, and the land around it not suitable for expansion. The family decided their best option was to tear the building down and use all salvageable materials to build a new house on a larger and more desirable piece of Hersey land on the other side of Route 11. Today, we would call this "recycling." If it had happened a few decades earlier, the family probably would have moved the building across the road with the help of their oxen.

Ray and his wife Dot raised their family in this house and lived there for over 60 years.

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