

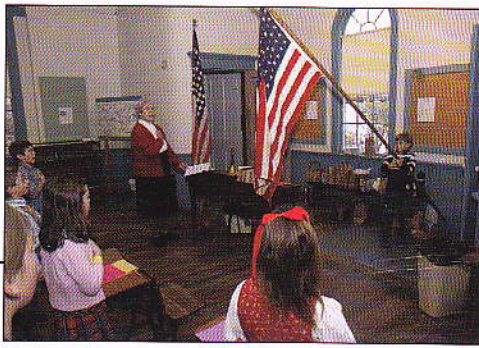
Center School — Old Tilton Road



CANTERBURY

NEW HAMPSHIRE

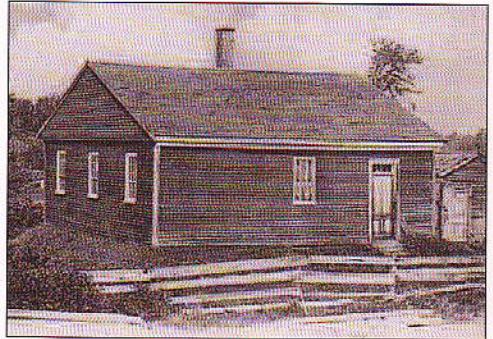
2007 ANNUAL REPORT



Pledge of Allegiance — Flag holder Brian Covell



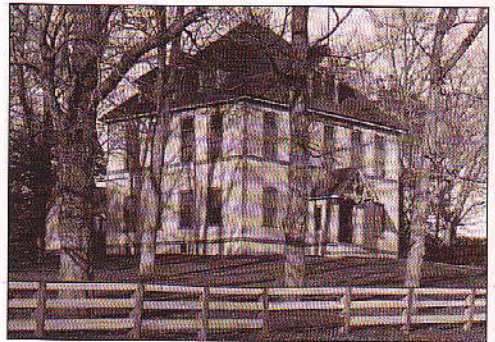
Old Schoolhouse Road School



Little Red Schoolhouse — Hill's Corner



Emery School — Northwest Road



Kezar Academy — Baptist Road



Blanchard School — Boyce Road



Carter School — Carter Hill Road

CANTERBURY'S ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

This issue of the Town Report celebrates the history of Canterbury's one room schoolhouses and particularly, the Center School (Houser Museum). According to Lyford's History, "Prior to 1758, such instruction as the children (received) must have been given at the fireside by parents, though it is not unlikely that the Rev. James Scales, the first minister in town of whom there is record, combined with his pastoral duties the imparting of knowledge to the young." Lyford notes further that in 1765, the Town voted four months schooling for the ensuing year, two months to be kept in winter and two months in the summer. At that time, town boundaries included Canterbury, Loudon, and Northfield. Loudon became a separate township in 1773 and Northfield in 1780. It was not until the annual meeting of 1794 that the Town voted to build six schoolhouses with their locations left to the selectmen, but by 1804 there was dissatisfaction with some locations considered to be inconvenient. It was not until 1814, at a re-convened town meeting, that the final number of nine districts was approved, which seems to have included the Shakers who had been separately recognized in 1812. Over the years, the number of districts was subject to change due to population changes, reaching at least as high as twelve.

The Center School was constructed in 1844 and was the only school building of the time that was made of brick. It served as a one room schoolhouse until 1956 when a new, modern elementary school was built by townspeople (but that's another story). In 1971, under the auspices of the Historical Society, the Center School was dedicated as the Houser Museum, in memory of Elizabeth Houser, a long-time and much-loved teacher at the school.

In 2005, the Society embarked on the task to "re-invent" the Center School as a living example of what education in a one room schoolhouse was like in the early part of the 20th century. Given that there were several residents who attended the many one room schoolhouses, and even taught in them, the Society felt it was an important way to capture living memories and history to be shared with current and future generations. The idea was to gather that history, involve the staff and students at the Elementary School in the development of the project, and make the experience a part of the curriculum. Joan Leggett was named to lead the effort and assembled a committee made up of Mary Ellen Fifield, Carolyn Udaloy, Gordon Jackson and Bob Scarponi. As the magnitude of the task became more apparent, so did the number of people involved (see list below). The Museum's contents were moved to the Archive space and the Elkins Memorial Building. Renovations, painting and general clean-up were completed. A generous private donation paid for a heating system to be installed making it possible, for the first time, to use the building year round without a woodstove. Work began in earnest to develop the curriculum in concert with school principal Mary Morrison, enrichment teacher Karen Gingrich, the staff of the Elementary School and Mary Ellen Fifield, who had taught in the one room Carter Hill School. After three years of planning and hard work, everyone's dream was about to be realized! A grand opening celebration was held on November 18, 2007, with more than 140 people attending.

Only days later, on a snowy November morning, and after 51 years with no pupils, Mary Ellen Fifield rang the school bell once again welcoming 25 students to class in the Center School. By the end of the 2008 school year (and in future school years) all the children from the Canterbury Elementary School (grades 1-5) will take part in this program. How pleased Elizabeth Houser would have been!

Congratulations and thank you to Joan Leggett, untiring Chairperson and to those who helped: John Leggett, Mary Ellen & Oliver Fifield, Stuart & Ann Fifield, Ruth Mann, Michael Bertolone, Scott McFarland, Catherine Dickson, Mary Kerwin, Judy Kupperman, Sarah Crow, Anne Emerson, Jan & Craig Briggs, Harry & Sarah Kinter, Jesse & Rich Tichko, Brant Tichko, Nick Riendeau, Linda Riendeau, Thad Reep, Carlyn Reep, Bailey Beltramo, Alexi Blackford, Bob Drew, Mary Colburn, Summer Blackford, Bob & Ellen Scarponi, Carolyn Udaloy, Steve Wearn, Charlie Cook, Gordon & Pam Jackson, Sandy Scripture, Robin Pearson, Cheryl Dupuis, Jenna Carroll-Plante, John O'Connor, David Heath, Jim Sawicki, David Balshaw, Larry Woods, Mason Newick, Ralph & Lucille Keeler, Alice Russell, Rodney & Frances Bascom, Chris & Beth Blair, Holli Twitchell, Judy Patterson, Canterbury Shaker Village, Gilman Hibbard, Norma Hutchinson, Claire Anderson, Suzanne Martin, Betsy Vaughn, Ginny Litalien, Mary Morrison, Karen Gingrich, Dawn & Arthur Stavros in memory of Gladys & Walter Goodwin.