



Schoolmates at the Upper Parish School.

Back row (left to right): Charles Demyt, Ruth Lockwood, Natalie Corsa, Minerva Morehouse. Front row (left to right): Marion Lockwood and Rita Corsa

Photo courtesy of Ruth Lockwood

The little one-room schoolhouse located on Godfrey Road West has had a long and colorful history. According to research done on the property by Lynne Barrelle, she believes that in 1880 George Sturges and Abby Morehouse (who owned property at 68 Godfrey Road) sold 1/4 acre of land on the south side of Godfrey Road to the Upper Parish School District for \$40.00. Ruth Lockwood, who attended the Upper Parish School house, remembers her grand- father told her the schoolhouse had originally been on the other side of the street from its current location, but she did not know if the building had been moved or if a new one had been built.

The schoolhouse served many of the children in the area including Gertrude Johnson (see article "A Walk Along Georgetown Road"), and Ruth Lockwood. When Weston built its first centrally located school (Hurlbutt) for all the children in town, the Upper Parish School District sold 1/4 acre and the little schoolhouse to the new Weston Volunteer Fire Department. It was voted on December 12, 1933 that "the land, buildings and premises of the Upper Parish School District be sold to the Weston Volunteer Fire Department, Incorporated, for the sum of One Dollar. The proceeds of any sale of said premises by said Fire Department shall be used only for the purchase of fire apparatus." In 1935, Wood Cowan (famous cartoonist and one-time First Selectman of Weston), purchased the land and building from the Fire Department for \$700. In speaking to various members of the Fire Department, we have been unable to determine if this money was indeed put toward fire apparatus.

Wood Cowan purchased land around the location of the schoolhouse, so that in June of 1944, when Wood sold the property to George and Carolyn Erban, it had become 3 acres. The Erban's lived there a short time, selling to Ross Worsley of California in September of 1947. The price at that time had climbed to \$8,000. Then in 1952 Mrs. Virginia Wright purchased the property for an amazing \$14,000 and lived there for many years.

It is unclear as to which of the first owners made renovations to the house. Ruth Lockwood remembers the wood stove that was used for heat was in the corner of the room

with a grate all around it so that the children would not be burned. She remembers there was space above the ceiling (possibly used for storage), but that there was no second floor at the time. At the entryway there was a pail of water with a ladle that had been brought in from the well out in back of the building. There was also an outhouse at that time.

The little entryway still remains, but there is now a large fireplace in the main room. We spoke to Thomas Wright, son of Virginia Wright, who remembers a small staircase which led to a bathroom and two tiny bedrooms, left and right of the stairs. Mr. Wright, however, who is 6' tall, could not stand totally upright in the two bedrooms. He recalls there was a small kitchen and dining room off the main room and a large pantry which has been converted into a bathroom.

In 1990, Ms. Dorothy Kyle purchased the house and made



Upper Parish School House (circled)

A COLORFUL HISTORY

some major renovations to the structure. She added a sizable dining room to the back of the house and a large sun room next to that. It is reported she also raised the roof to add headroom to the upstairs and while the structure was open, she had her mattress and box springs placed in the bedroom. When Janet Sage purchased the house in 1993 she had to also purchase the box springs as they were unable to get them back down the windy small staircase.

Janet has lived in the house for six years now and loves being a part of the history. She has lovingly decorated the house with a mixture of old New England and Southwest United States. Along with her two dogs, seven cats, and a few relatives thrown in for good measure, Janet has kept the feel of the school-room of long ago, adding her own personal touches to the rest of the house. We are most grateful to Janet for letting us photograph one of Weston's oldest standing historical sites.

(My thanks to Lynne Barrelle, Bob Studwell, Thomas Wright, Janet Sage, Roger Core and Tad Dillon for their help in putting this article together.)



Exterior of the former Upper Parish School House located on Godfrey Road West.



Dining room addition to the one-room schoolhouse done in 1990



Living room of Janet Sage owner of the Upper Parish Schoolhouse. This was the original room used by students.

Fireplace added sometime after 1935 replacing woodstove.

Present day photos by Roger Core.



1928), located at 47 Godfrey Road West.



Upper Parish School "North West No. 5 Senter near Mr. John S. Andrews, known as Upper Parish," was one of six school districts established by Norfield Society in 1794. In 1856 the Town of Weston took over responsibility for the education system from the church society. A typical school house was one room about twenty feet by twenty feet. Two or three small windows provided the only light. In

winter a large fireplace roasted students sitting near it, while those far away froze. A very basic education was provided by teachers who received a salary of \$10 per month. Upper Parish School, located on Godfrey Road West, served the students of Weston until the 20th century.