

## THE CENTER SCHOOL OF THE HOPLAND DISTRICT

LOCATION - on Fairview Street, probably a short distance south of the power line that crosses Fairview Street just south of Via Maria.

The Center School house in the Hopland District is often referred to in the records as the Red school house. According to the 1900 Lee School Committee Report it was located on Fairview Street and was built, or at least completed, in 1791 and was in use for about 40 years. If the 1900 School Committee report is accurate the original Hopland Center School house could not have been the Hopland District School house #1 on Stockbridge Road, thought by some to have been the oldest school house in Lee.

That 1900 report says that the Hopland Center School house "*stood on Fairview Street a short distance south of Peter Duffy's*" (Peter Duffy's 1900 location). Peter Duffy's house stood on the east side of Fairview Street. The house is no longer there, having burned down many years ago. At the end of this chapter I will attempt to further clarify the possible location of the school house.

The Fairview Street location was geographically more central than today's South Lee village and was probably closer to the center of population of the Hoplands in that pre-industrial, agricultural era. It was not until later that a school house was built in the so-called Forge District, i.e., today's village of South Lee.

The first recorded meeting of the Hopland School District was held on April 12, 1791. A month and a half later, on May 30, 1791, at a legal meeting of the Hopland School District it was "*Voted to Continue the School*" and "*Voted to finish the School house.*"

On March 25, 1799 (incorrectly dated in the record as Monday, 25th Jan<sup>y</sup>) it was voted to divide the Hopland District into 2 schools as recommended by a committee appointed two weeks earlier. Without going into the details of this division it is of great interest that part of the line of division went northward from the Housatonic River to "*the Road leading from the Red School house to Stockbridge (meaning the old Stockbridge<sup>s</sup> County road) and then on said Road to Stockbridge Line.*" This vote suggests that there was until then only one school in the Hopland District and makes it clear that its school house was located near a County road *other* than the road that is still known today as Stockbridge Road.

Most of the early meetings of the Hopland School District were held in the Center (or Red) School house, but I can find no mention of this school house after 1828. The Hopland District Center School house, it should be remembered, was not the Center School house of the town proper.

The records of the meetings of the Hopland School District are rather sketchy. It is impossible to tell, in most instances, what happened after a vote was taken, although sometimes the record will show that an affirmative vote was rescinded at a subsequent meeting. Often there are so many conflicting votes over several months or years that I'm unable to find what action was finally taken.

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<sup>s</sup> Crossed out in the original record.

In the record of April 8, 1805 are the following entries:

*Voted that those people on the Road leading from the Lee meeting house to Stockbridge by Mr. John Freese's be set off in a separate District School<sup>9</sup> limited as follows: beginning at the house of the widow of the late Isaac Howk & including all the families on that Road to Stockbridge & all north of it as far as the Hopland District extends.*

*Voted also that the persons who are so set off as a separate school shall be considered as drawing with them the avails of the property they may possess within the Hoplands school District.*

*Voted that Benj<sup>m</sup> Hinckley be the agent for the Northwest school the ensuing year.*

There is no record of a school house being built for this new school at this time. At a meeting on April 25, 1808 it was voted to remove the school house to the Center between James Smith's and Miss Dodge's, "provided the owners of this land will give it for the purpose." It was suggested that it be moved about 300 yards west. However, there is no clue as to its exact position at that time and I can find no record that tells whether it was moved or not.

In reviewing countless sales of land in this area of Fairview Street, I have been unable to find any reference to a "school house lot" in any of the deeds. Because of this, I believe it is most likely that the Hopland District Center school house was built on privately owned land with the permission of the owner.

A meeting on April 7, 1826 voted on the question of whether the Hopland Center and Hopland Northwest districts should be united and a road opened from the Hopland Center School house across to Benj. Hinckley's and that the School-house be removed (closed?) in the Center when the district thinks best. They voted to accept, but at a Lee town meeting in 1833 there was a warrant article "to lay out a road from Samuel Dorr's to the Brick Schoolhouse . . . beginning 1 rod east of Brick Schoolhouse, past Warren Hinckley's . . . to Samuel Dorr's." In 1834 that plan was abandoned. Benjamin Hinckley died in 1833 and had a so Warren, so apparently both proposed roads were to have covered approximately the same route from Fairview Street near the present power line to a point on the Stockbridge Road near today's entrance to the Turnpike Service area.

In any event, it appears that nothing was done at this time. In 1828 there was a petition by the "Inhabitants of the Hopland Center District" asking that a meeting be called to see if a new school house should be built or the old one repaired; to determine where the school house should be situated if a new one built; and to decide how to dispose of the old school house. As a result of this petition a meeting of the Center District of the Hopland District was held on April 8, 1828 in the Center or Red School house. The minutes of that meeting tell of the election of a moderator and clerk and no other details of the meeting except for the sentence "True copy of the petition warrant return and proceedings." The meaning of that comment is unclear to me.

At this point I am going to do a little guess work. I think that at some time after this 1828 meeting a new school house was built on the Stockbridge Road, if one had not already been built. Presumably the old Hopland District Center School house on Fairview Street was then abandoned and the new school house on

<sup>9</sup> Here District had been written first, but was crossed off and the word School substituted. This suggests to me that the intent was to form another school within the same Center District of the Hoplands and not a separate District as was the case with the Forge District and the East District.

Stockbridge Road became the Hopland District Center School house and two years later was renamed Hopland District School house #1.

As we saw earlier, the Hopland District Center School house was said by the 1900 Lee School Committee to have been in use for about 40 years after 1791, which would be sometime around 1830. If this is true it would seem to rule out the unlikely possibility that the building was moved from Fairview Street to Stockbridge Road. After it was no longer used it is logical to assume that the students then attended the school house nearest their homes, either the Hopland District School house #1 on Stockbridge Road or Hopland District School house #2 in the village of South Lee.

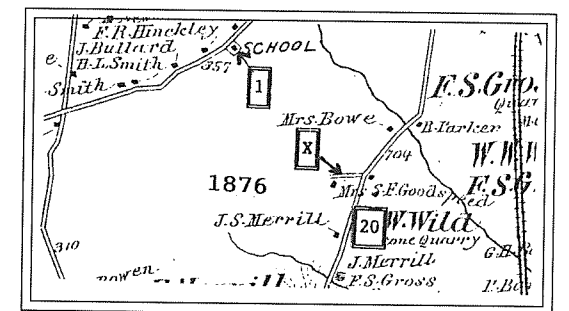
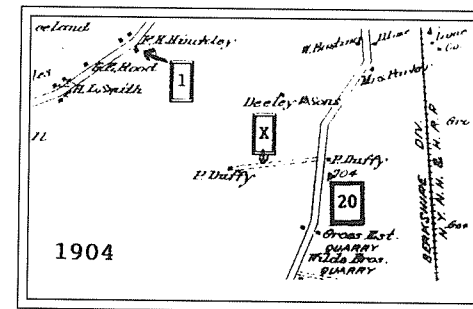
*Where was the Hopland District Center School house actually located?*

On March 25, 1799 (incorrectly dated in the record as Monday, 25th Jan<sup>y</sup>) when it was voted to divide the Hopland District into 2 schools it was clear that the school house was located near one end of a County road. The wording makes it clear that the County road was not the road that is still known today as Stockbridge Road. Without going into the details of the recommended division we read that part of the line of division went northward from the Housatonic River to "the Road leading from the Red School house to Stockbridge (meaning the old Stockbridge County road<sup>10</sup>) and then on said Road to Stockbridge Line."

Since the Lee School Committee report of 1900, when reviewing the history of the school system in Lee, said that the Hopland Center School house had "stood on Fairview Street a short distance south of Peter Duffy's," it is apparent that the eastern end of this section of the County road was at a road that is Fairview Street today.

The 1904 map, below left, shows Peter Duffy's property located on both sides of Fairview Street. Peter Duffy had run the farm of Miss Sarah Goodspeed for many years, and when Sarah died in 1895 she left her farm and residence to Peter. The 1876 map, below right, shows Miss Goodspeed as owner of these properties on both sides of Fairview Street. On these and other maps the X points either to the old County road or to the lane that I believe is a remnant of the County road; number 20 shows the approximate location of the Hopland District Center School house on Fairview Street; and number 1 shows the location of the Hopland District School house #1 on Stockbridge Road.

Having established Peter Duffy's location on Fairview Street, we now have to ask



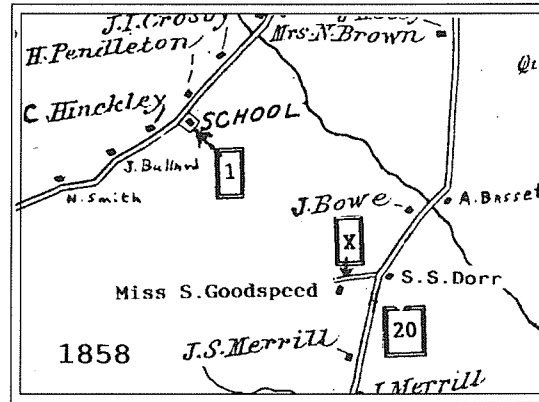
ourselves what the 1900 report of the Lee School Committee meant by "a short distance south of Peter Duffy's." Was it south of Peter Duffy's property on the west side of Fairview Street or his property on the east side of the street? I believe that it

<sup>10</sup> This parenthetical expression, explaining which road is involved, is not in the original report of the committee, but is added to the original record of the acceptance of the committee report. The word I read as "old" might be "abd" (abandoned?).

is most likely that they were referring to his residence rather than to his fields, barn and any other farm buildings.

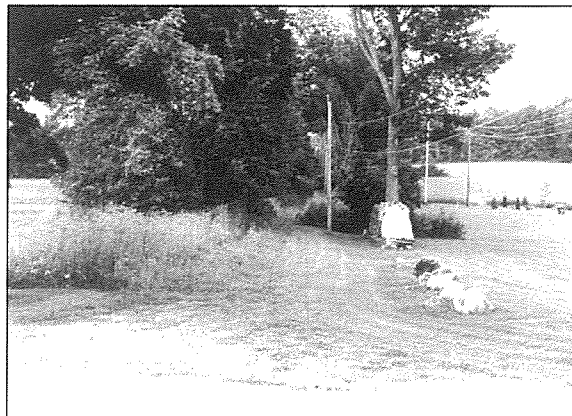
In order to make a guess as to where his residence stood we have to look at Sarah Goodspeed's will. She died in 1895 and her will, probated in January, 1896, leaving her property to Peter Duffy, made it clear that her residence had been on the east side of Fairview Street. Besides leaving him the 50 acres formerly owned by her father, she left him "that part of my real estate called the Dorr place ..... with the house in which I live." It is most likely that Peter Duffy used the same house as his residence after he inherited the property. But what was the real estate called the Dorr place, and where was it?

In 1859 Sarah had bought<sup>11</sup> property from Samuel S. Dorr on the east side of Fairview Street. The deed says that it contained 6 acres and that the house lot was in the southernmost part of that 6 acre lot. The map of 1858, on the right, shows that the S. S. Dorr property on the east side of Fairview Street is the same property later owned by Miss Goodspeed and later by Peter Duffy. The Dorr place stood opposite the lane leading to Miss Goodspeed's property.



(NOTE - There were imperfections in this area of this wall map at the Stockbridge Library, so this map was created by using the 1876 map as a template and filling in the names shown on the 1858 map.)

Today that property on the east side of Fairview Street, across from the old lane, lies under the power line that crosses Fairview street. It is here that the old Dorr-Goodspeed-Duffy residence had stood before it burned down many years ago. Frank



LOOKING WEST FROM FAIRVIEW STREET AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LANE WHICH I BELIEVE TO BE THE REMNANT OF THE FORMER COUNTY ROAD WHICH IS MARKED WITH AN X ON THE MAPS. - Current picture by author

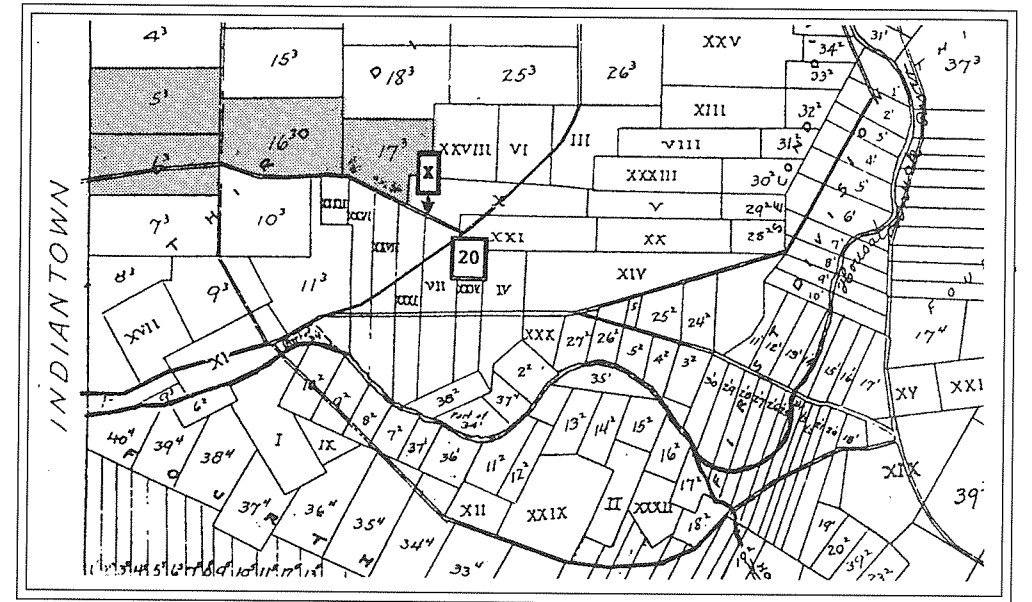
<sup>11</sup> Book 162, page 150, dated 3/24/1859 - Registry of Deeds.

Consolati says that he remembers the fire when he was a child and would guess that the house burned down around 1920.

If the Hopland District Center School house stood a short distance south of Peter Duffy's residence, and if this residence stood in the southernmost part of the six acre lot, then it is a reasonable guess that the school house stood on the east side of Fairview Street just south of where the power line crosses today. That land is today the property of Mr. Joseph Valenti.

But what happened to the old County road? Comparing the old 1795 map and the Hopland map with the later maps of Sarah Goodspeed's property, one gets the impression that the lane on the west side of Fairview Street could be a remnant of the County road. I believe that it is, and will attempt to show why.

The earliest deeds involving property in this area often used references to the Hopland lots that are shown on the old Hopland map. For ease of reference a



portion of the Hoplands map is reproduced here. The lots discussed below have been highlighted.

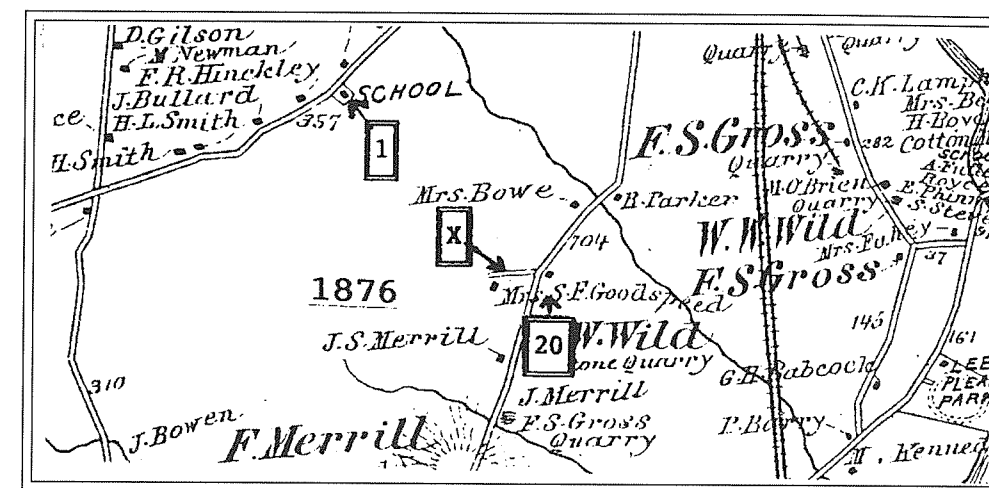
At a Lee town meeting on May 7th, 1798 it was voted "to discontinue the road from a little west of the Red school house westward to the crossroad from Rufus Stanton to the Forge." At a town meeting a month later, June 4th, 1798 it was voted to reconsider the vote of May 7th. That the road was eventually abandoned is certain, but I have not been able to find when this occurred.

Tracing back through the deeds to the Goodspeed farm property one finds that it included at least part of Lot 16 and all of lot 17 in the 3rd Division of the Hoplands. Her deed<sup>12</sup> to that property says that the property, in part, "was bounded south by ..... the line of the old road." Lots 16 and 17 in the 3rd Division can be seen on the old Hoplands map to border the road marked with an X, which is the County road that was later abandoned.

<sup>12</sup> Book 151, page 448, dated 5/15/1858 - Registry of Deeds.

## HOPLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL #1

LOCATION - on the south side of Stockbridge Road, about one half mile west of Devon Road and about six tenths of a mile east of Church Street.



This 1876 map identifies Hopland District School house # 1 (1). Here its geographic relationship to the old Hopland District Center School house (20) can be seen. The X marks the remnants of the old County road, now only a lane to Sarah Goodspeed's farm.

The old maps show it to be about 1/2 mile beyond the Devon Road site of the West District school. The site would be a little west of where Stockbridge Road now crosses the Mass Pike. It stood on the south side of Stockbridge Road and as nearly as I can tell by comparing old and new maps of the area, it was about 100 to 200 feet east of today's entrance to the Massachusetts Turnpike service area.

Without professional help and an extensive search at the Registry of Deeds it is impossible for me to be more precise about the site of the school house. The properties in this area have passed through several hands including those of several holding companies since the time of Wellington Smith. Such a search might in the end be fruitless, for there is a strong possibility that the land may never have been owned by the Hopland School District, as was discussed in Chapter 1.

This school house was apparently the successor to the old Hopland Center School house discussed in the previous chapter. In that chapter are recounted the 1805 vote to establish a Northwest school within the Hopland District, the 1805 vote to move the school house further west, and an 1828 vote to consider building a new school house and to determine how to dispose of the old school house. Noting the use of the singular "house" here, there was apparently no other school in this part of the Hopland District at that time.

While I don't know when the school house on Stockbridge Road was built, it was probably built sometime around 1828, or soon thereafter, as a result of the 1828 vote. Since the last meeting in the Hopland Center School house took place in 1828, it is logical to assume that it was abandoned after that and replaced by the school house on Stockbridge Road that by 1830 was known as Hopland District School house #1.

Where was Rufus Stanton in 1798 and where was the road from his place to the Forge? Rufus Stanton owned land which he sold<sup>13</sup> in 1805 to Josiah Bradley. This was 62+ acres of land consisting of Lot 5 in the 3rd Division and the Northeast part of Lot 6 in the 3rd Division, except for 3/4 of an acre which he had previously sold to Elisha Dodge. Again, looking at the map on the previous page, we can see that Lot 6 is on the old County road as well as on a road leading to the present village of South Lee, referred to in the May 7, 1798 vote (above) as the "crossroad from Rufus Stanton to the Forge." This Hoplands map shows a road leading to today's South Lee and I believe it is what today is Church Street. While the road does not appear on the 1795 map of Lee on page 9 it is probably because it was not a County road. Only County roads are shown on the 1795 map.

If we now look at the sale of property to Elisha Dodge, mentioned in the previous paragraph, we get more insight into the location of the County road that led to the Hopland Center School house. Rufus Stanton sold 3/4 of an acre in Lot 6 of the 3rd Division to Elisha Dodge, Cordwainer<sup>14</sup>, in 1804. The deed<sup>15</sup> says that it was "at the confluence of the roads leading to Lee meeting house and the red School house," that is, at a junction of the Stockbridge Road and the old County road. Thus it appears that the old County road from the Red School house to today's Church Street ("the crossroad from Rufus Stanton to the Forge") had not yet been abandoned by 1805 and that it met what is today's Stockbridge Road at today's Church Street.

*To summarize the above:*

1. The Hopland Center School house was on Fairview Street.
2. The school house was a short distance south of Peter Duffy's, almost certainly south of his residence.
3. Peter Duffy's residence was almost certainly on the east side of Fairview Street, across from a lane leading to his farm.
4. The farm land was once bordered on the south by a County road, since abandoned, that went from Fairview Street to Church Street.
5. The school house was near the eastern end of a County Road.
6. The lane is almost certainly a remnant of that County road.
7. The beginning of that lane can still be seen about 1/4 mile south of Willow Brook, or about 1/10 mile beyond Via Maria.
8. Clearly, with the information available, the site of the old Hopland District Center School house cannot be located precisely.

<sup>13</sup>Book 43, page 606, dated 10/14/1805 - Registry of Deeds.

<sup>14</sup>Cordwainer is an archaic term for either a worker in leather or a shoemaker. Cordwain is an old English version of cordovan. The deed under discussion says that Dodge will erect "Tan vats," so he was apparently in the business of tanning leather.

<sup>15</sup>Book 47, page 93, dated 9/11/1804 - Registry of Deeds.

There is no doubt that Hopland District School house #1 stood on Stockbridge Road. In 1900 Lee School Committee reported that school house #1 of the Hopland School District was a brick building and that it was still standing near F. K. Hinckley's. The 1876 map at the beginning of this chapter shows a school located on the south side of the Stockbridge Road across from the building labeled with F. R. Hinckley's name. The same property, now labeled with the name F. K. Hinckley, can be seen on the 1904 map on page 19. This map was made after the school house was no longer in use and the former school house is now seen to be part of F. K. Hinckley's property.

In 1916 Frank K. Hinckley sold<sup>16</sup> 100 acres on both sides of Stockbridge Road to Wellington Smith. There is no mention of the school lot in the deed, but it is clear that the deeded property, as I read its description, included the land occupied by the old abandoned school house. I have not found a separate deed selling the school house lot to the Hinckleys after it was closed. This again was apparently a case of a school house being built on private property with the cooperation of the land owner.

In addition, if further proof is needed, the Lee School Committee reported in 1859 that the West District School house (of the town proper) and school house #1 of the Hopland School District were near each other. In fact they were only a half mile apart. The following is an excerpt from that 1859 report:

*.... the West district of the Town and Hopland No.1 contain together barely enough scholars to make one good school. The average attendance<sup>17</sup> in both districts the past year amounted only to 29. These districts lie contiguous, and the West District has built a commodious school house, pleasantly located within the limits of the Hoplands<sup>18</sup>, and convenient of access to the scholars of both districts, past which indeed some of the scholars in Hopland No. 1 must go to get to their own school house.*

A picture of the old school house that I have used for this chapter is from a poor copy in the Lee Library and is reproduced at the end of the chapter. A notation accompanying the picture says that the school house was torn down by Wellington Smith, Sr. in 1917, but it incorrectly identifies it as Hopland District School house #6, which, as we shall see, was in East Lee. It also identifies it as the "first district school house built in Lee - Stockbridge Road," which is also incorrect, for we have shown that the Hopland Center School house on Fairview Street was the first school built in the Hopland District. However, if the picture is of the school house torn down by Wellington Smith, then this is indeed a picture of Hopland District School house #1, for Mr Smith eventually owned the land on which it stood.

In 1883 the Lee School Committee reported that the Hopland District School house #1 was too small. Finally, their report for the year ending March 10, 1888 said that "Hopland No. 1 was deemed unfit for use a year ago and the school discontinued." From this it appears that it probably closed at the end of the 1887 school year.

<sup>16</sup> Book 386, page 92, dated 5/3/1916 - Registry of Deeds.

<sup>17</sup> According to that 1859 report, the West District school had 24 registered scholars, but the average daily attendance was 16. The Hopland No. 1 school had 31 registered scholars, with an average daily attendance of 13.

<sup>18</sup> The fact that the West District school house was located within the Hoplands (just barely) did not make it a Hopland District school house. It is important to remember that the Hoplands was part of Lee, even if their school system was separately financed. There was no reason that the town could not build schools within the Hoplands District.



THE ABANDONED HOPLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL HOUSE #1 - Lee Library



said road to Stockbridge including the inhabitants of said road, and from the mouth of Hopbrook up said brook to Tyringham line all south of said lines is to constitute one school. And the remaining part of the district be divided as follows (viz) That the road leading by Mr. Edmond Hinckley's be the division as far as our present school house and from thence a due south line to the river all east of the above described line is to be one school and all west is to be another."

(This last vote gives some idea of the difficulties encountered in trying to interpret these old records.)

At a meeting of the "Inhabitants of the South School in the Hopland School District in Lee" was held at Mr. John Couch's on Mar. 29, 1796 it was "Voted to build a School house within twelve rods from bridge over J. Couches Mill Brook<sup>20</sup> ...." "Voted to build a School house twenty six feet by twenty." They then adjourned until April 5, at which time it was "Voted to build the School House near the Culver house so called on the east side of said house the front of the house to stand on the line of the road." and "Voted to build a school house of wood and not of brick" The meeting was adjourned and met again on April 11, at which time a committee was formed to "determine what the District shall do; whither (sic -WC) they shall Divide, or not; and if s<sup>d</sup> Committee shall say, it is Best to Divide, they are to say how many Schools there shall be, and where the Dividing Lines shall run."

This apparent indecisiveness continued. The appointed Committee reported on April 15, 1796 that they felt the district could not be divided without an act of the Legislature. They said that the District could erect as many schools as they saw fit, but that each school should be open to all the inhabitants of the district. They ended up saying that they felt it best at present to have but one school, with one or more Masters, depending on the number of children to be taught.

Subsequent meetings over the next couple of years dealt with matters of rent of school lands, voting to allow David Ingersoll a Dollar which he paid an attorney for advice, the requirement that each pupil be required to provide a quarter of a cord of wood cut for the fire or be removed from the school, and other such matters. They even formed a committee of three men to "turn those Schollars out of School who have had no wood provided for them.." But apparently no further action was taken on building a new school house or enlarging the existing school house.

Finally, on October 29, 1798 it was "Voted to set up Two Schools one at the red School house the other in the Neighborhood near the Forge." Just when the second school house was built is not clear, but at a meeting on Oct. 8, 1799 it was "Voted to set up Two Schools the winter approaching - one at the School house near the Forge - The other at the red School house or at some place where the persons [who] send to the red School house shall see fit to direct."

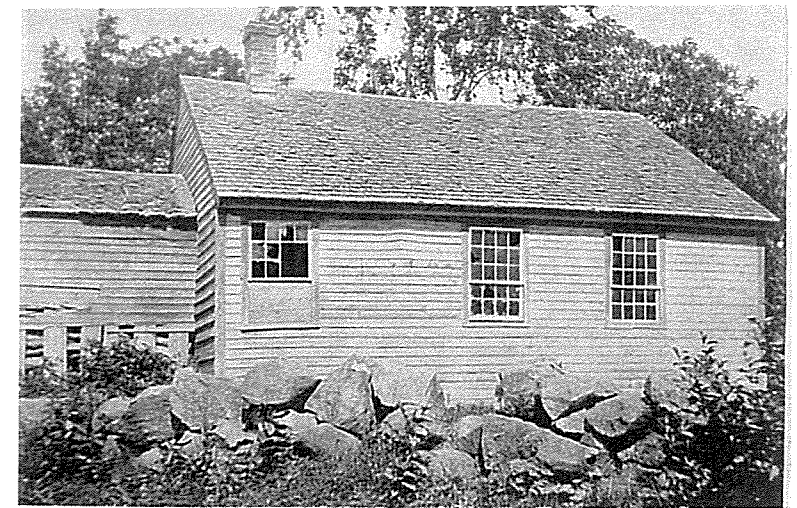
Thus the school house in what was variably known as the South School or the Forge District was apparently in use before 1800. The Forge itself was located on or near the site of the today's Hurlbut Willow Mill of Mead Paper. The Forge District of the Hop lands, however, apparently included all the area of today's village of South Lee, because we find that the first school house in the Forge district was built on the corner of today's Meadow and Pine Streets.

In the warrant preceding the Nov. 25, 1811 meeting of the Hopland School District included the item: "To see if the Inhabitants of the Forge District will consent to

<sup>20</sup>John Couch owned a considerable amount of land near the Beartown Mountain Road and the river, some of it on a brook, which he sold in 1806 and 1809. These sales are recorded in Book 44, page 353 and in Book 47, page 97 - Registry of Deeds.

be taxed in order to raise a sum of money sufficient to purchase the School house in said Forge District which is now owned by a certain number of Proprietors." At the meeting of that date it was voted to raise \$310.00 to purchase the school house and to make necessary repairs. Thus it appears that the school house was originally built and owned by some of the inhabitants of the area and may later have been bought from them.

The reasons I say that it may have been bought after the vote of 1811 are several. In the first place we have seen that affirmative votes have not always been acted upon subsequently. Also they may have bought the school house as voted, but not the land on which it stood. As noted in Chapter 1, the property on which the Hopland District School house #2 stood was sold in 1877 by a group of private individuals to another private individual, Theodore Risley. This occurred even though the school house was active then and for about 13 more years. As was reported in Chapter 1, the 1877 deed included a clause that reserved "to the public or school district all the right they may have to have and maintain a school house for the benefit of said district on the same." The 1904 map at the beginning of Chapter 20 shows the former school property to be part of the Risley estate.



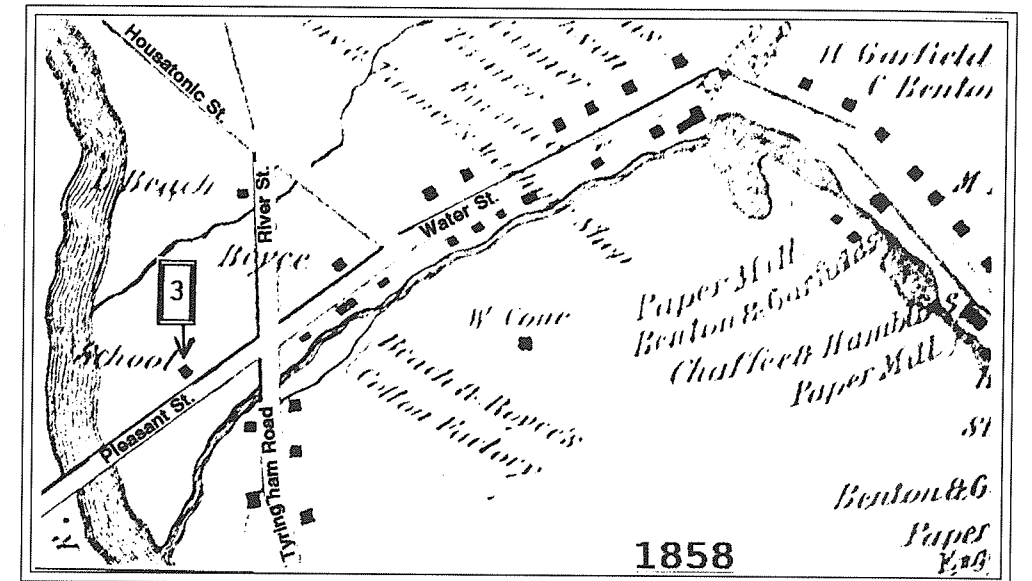
SO-LEE, School House  
In corner north from Keenans

This picture was found and brought to the attention of the author after this booklet was published. It was in a group of very old pictures of South Lee. It is undoubtedly a picture of Hopland District School House # 2. The above handwritten notation appears on the back of the picture. Of the two old school houses in South Lee only Hopland District School House # 2 was located on a corner. The map on page 81 shows that it lies in a roughly southerly direction from Keenan's property. Unless there was another Keenan property at the time that it was written, the notation on the back of the picture should have said that the school house was *south* of the Keenan property, not north of it.

- From the personal collection of Mr. Douglas Ingram

## HOPLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL #3

LOCATION - on Pleasant Street near today's Massachusetts Turnpike interchange, near today's Pleasant Street entrance to Diesel Dans. When the Turnpike Interchange was built the part of Pleasant Street on which the old school house stood was eliminated and today is just a stretch of grass and brush.



The 1858 map shows the location of Hopland District School house #3 (3) on Pleasant Street near East Lee Corner. The beginning of Pleasant Street no longer exists, since some of it, maybe 400-450 feet, was rerouted when the Massachusetts Turnpike interchange was built. The old school house stood on the part of the street that was eliminated. I have added the street names to the original map for clarification.

As we noted earlier there were three districts or divisions of the Hopland School District as early as 1800. The 1881 Lee School Committee Report said that school house #3 of the Hopland School District was near "the stone mill." The report of 1883 said that it was near the stone mill and added that the room (i.e., the school house) was much too small. Where and what was the stone mill? The Valley Gleaner of Sept 14, 1898 informs us: "The stone mill formerly known as the Beach and Royce factory - recently purchased and in business as the Lee Woolen Co. was burned Thursday afternoon."

The 1900 Lee School Committee report says that a Hopland school house must have been built east of the river soon after the beginning of the century, but that no record of it has been found. The first mention I can find of the Hopland District School house #3 is in the Hopland School District records reporting a meeting held there in 1838. That report also said that it was near the factory of Messrs. Beach and Royce, and that factory can be seen on the 1858 map above.

An 1896 report of the Lee School Committee said that there was a meeting held at this school seventy years earlier. I haven't been able to find a record of a meeting held in Hopland District school house #3 in 1826. The first report of a meeting at this school house that I could find was the 1838 meeting reported in the previous paragraph.



A lot for the school house was purchased<sup>21</sup> on August 3, 1848 from Kenaz and Polly Clark. The lot contained only 7.3 square rods. When the school house lot was sold in later transactions the same figure was given, and it was said to have 60 feet frontage and 30 feet depth. While the size of this lot seems absurdly small, we noted in our discussion of Hopland District School house #2 that it was proposed that the dimensions of that school house be 20 feet by 26 feet. If school house #3 was of a similar size it would fit on a 30 foot by 60 foot lot, and would account for the repeated complaints that the Hopland District School house #3 was too small.

The 1848 purchase date is a puzzle, for as we noted above it was in use by 1838, and possibly by 1826. Why this lot was purchased in 1848 if the school house existed as early as ten to 20 years earlier I don't know. Possibly the school house was originally built on borrowed or rented private land, which apparently was not an uncommon practice. There is a possibility that this lot was purchased to add to the existing school house lot. A sentence in the 1855 Lee School Committee report is a clue to the latter possibility. In that report the committee said "Although they have recently enlarged their school house, yet they have twenty more scholars than they have seats."

There are repeated references in the old School Committee reports about the inadequacy of the size of the school and its bad location. They reported it to be too small, too near the road, and too near a noisy factory. The latter complaint was expressed in the report of the Lee School Committee in 1845, which said that it was "under the eaves of a Factory, whose incessant din is heard with nearly the same distinctness as were the school house itself a cotton mill."

In 1896 the Lee School Committee reported that the school was closed at end of spring term (that would have been in 1895). They didn't know when it was erected, but said that there was a meeting of the Hopland District there 70 years earlier.

After the school house was closed Robert Jeter bought<sup>22</sup> the property from the town in 1897 for \$104.12<sup>23</sup>. A month later he sold<sup>24</sup> it to Mary Moore. Mary Moore sold<sup>25</sup> it the same day to Elizabeth Jeter. Finally on 10/21/1902 Elizabeth Jeter sold<sup>26</sup> it to the new trolley system, the Berkshire Street Railway. A survey done in 1901, when the trolley company bought a large piece of property from Charles Miller, shows that it surrounded the little property of Jeter - the old school house lot. The plot plan of that 1901 survey can be seen at the end of this chapter.

The 1900 Lee School Committee Report said that this school was "near the junction of River and Pleasant streets. It was enlarged later and moved a short distance westward and is now (1900 -WC) a dwelling house about 200 yards east of the covered bridge." Maps drawn before the Massachusetts Turnpike and its Lee interchange were built show River Street as a short stretch of road extending from the south end of Housatonic Street to Pleasant Street and the Tyringham Road. The reference to a covered bridge was at first confusing, but I eventually found that there was once a covered bridge where old Pleasant Street crosses the Housatonic River near Little Italy. It can be seen on a bird's-eye picture map of 1878, which hangs in the

<sup>21</sup> Book 123, page 299, dated 8/23/1888 - Registry of Deeds.

<sup>22</sup> Book 290, page 502, dated 11/30/1896 - Registry of Deeds.

<sup>23</sup> 1897 Town Treasurer's Report:

Sale of School property Hoplands #3 - \$100.00  
Interest - \$ 4.12  
\$104.12

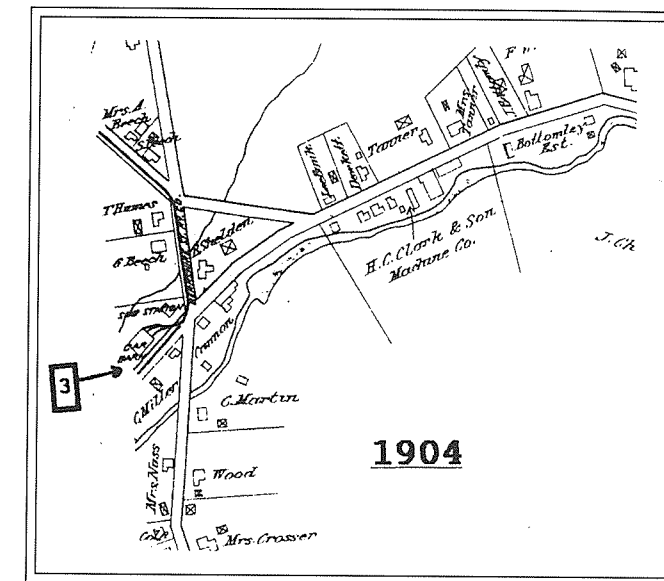
<sup>24</sup> Book 298, Page 344, dated 4/17/1897 - Registry of Deeds.

<sup>25</sup> Book 290, page 525, dated 4/17/1897 - Registry of Deeds.

<sup>26</sup> Book 319, page 20, dated 10/7/1902 - Registry of Deeds.

Lee Library. The little building just east of that covered bridge, is undoubtedly the school house, outhouse and all.

A news item in the 10/15/1902 issue of the Valley Gleaner tells us why it had to be moved and locates its original location more precisely. That news item says, "Work on the Berkshire Street Railway company's car barn on Pleasant Street has begun and it will be pushed to completion with all possible rapidity. The building extends from a line just west of the substation to the old school house building, in fact the latter will have to be moved, as it stands about two feet on the car barn site. The new structure will be of wood." Note that the brick structure still standing near Diesel Dan's is neither the original car barn nor the original sub station. I hope that the maps added at the end of this chapter will help to clarify the changes that occurred in this area.



The 1904 map, right, shows, at its extreme western edge (left edge), the car barn and substation mentioned in the 10/12/1902 Gleaner news item when the car barn was built. The original map unfortunately ends here but the news item tells us that part of the old school house stood where the western end of the car barn was to be built. Number 3 on the map shows about where the abandoned school house stood before it was moved.

The original substation was later replaced by a newer building a little further west. The Gleaner of 1/3/1912 reports that the new power station was built in 1911, and was a handsome structure of brick costing \$40,000.00. The site of this newer building can be seen on the 1933 plot plan where it is labeled "Sub Station." The brick sub station still stands and is used for businesses now.

