

## EARLY SCHOOLS IN WATERFORD

The early schools in Waterford were due to private initiative. The first mention of a private school is that of one kept prior to 1788 by a James Dugan. In 1813 Classic Hall was constructed as a private normal school for young men; and still stands at 48 First Street. The Latin inscription "Esto Monumentum Aere Perennis" is still found on a plaque over the front entrance. Its translation means "Let this be a monument more lasting than bronze". After 178 years it appears to live up to its motto.

The Waterford-Halfmoon Union Free School District is the outgrowth of the once famous Waterford Academy which stood on the corner of Division and Sixth Street where St. Mary's Hall now stands. The Waterford Academy was incorporated by the New York State legislature on April 28, 1834 and admitted by the Regents on February 6, 1839. William T. Seymour was principal in 1836-38; Samuel R. House 1839-40; and William G. Lloyd 1841-47. During the last few years of the career of the Academy it was located on Second Street in the building that was previously occupied by Emma Willard.

In 1819 Madame Emma Willard came from Vermont and established a seminary for young ladies on Second Street. In 1821 Madame Willard was induced by some Troy gentlemen to move her school to that city, where it has since grown into the famous "Emma Willard School".

In the early 1800s there were six separate private elementary schools located in Waterford. An elementary school for Negro children was conducted for a long time by John House in the Presbyterian Church. At this time, about 1811, there were many slaves living in the Village. Mr. House acted as superintendent of this Sabbath School, and also cared for fires and the upkeep of the classrooms.



*Classic Hall*

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the popular success of the many private academies which had multiplied during the previous half century, led to a demand for a school maintained by popular taxation. Early records are scarce, but we have heard of an old document dated 1838 which seems to indicate a school of public character.

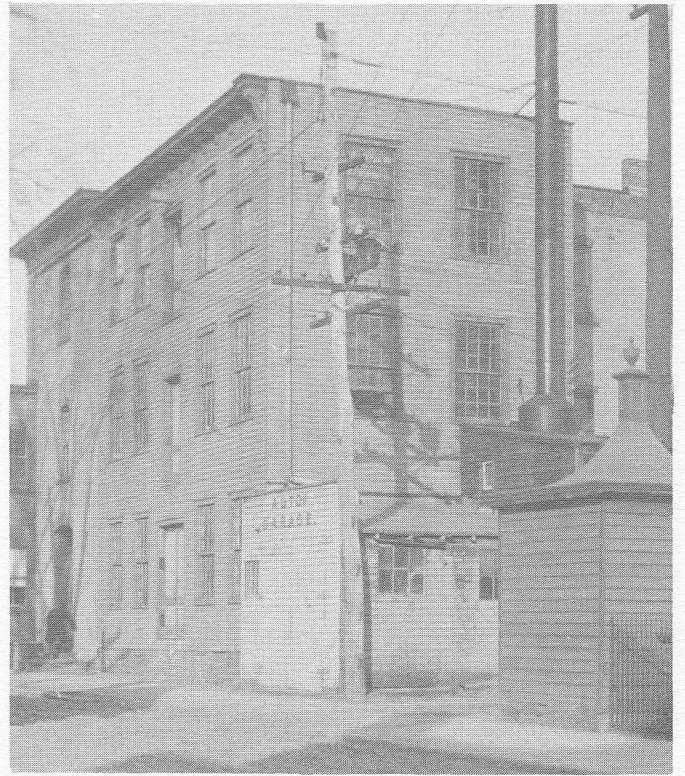
"We the subscribe inspectors of schools for the town of Waterford, County of Saratoga, do certify that at a meeting called for that purpose we have examined William W. Day and do believe he is well qualified in respect to moral character, learning ability to instruct a common school in this town for one year from this date."

November 1938

Signed: George D. Scott  
John P. Higgins  
Lysander Button  
Inspectors of Schools

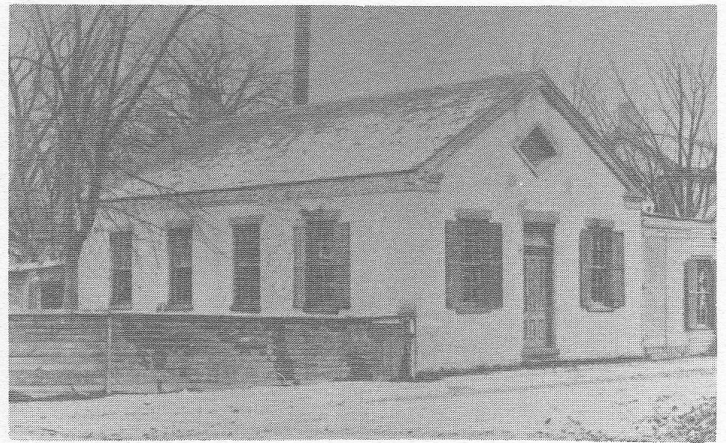
In 1849 a building was erected by popular taxation at a cost of \$15,000 on the corner of Fourth and Division Streets (site of the present post office). It was built of brick and contained at first six rooms. Mr. William W. Day was hired to teach and authorized to hire a capable assistant. There appeared to have been 232 pupils registered for instruction. The building had three floors with three teachers per floor teaching non-graded classes. The records reveal a receipt from Sarah Stevens to teach for \$1.50 a week and was dated April 18, 1850.

The Act of 1853 authorized communities to establish public high schools. In 1854 the Union Free School System was organized with Charles Johnson as the first president of the Board of Education and Silar Pratt as principal. Mr. Pratt was paid \$112.50 for the quarter ending March 24, 1954. As of 1859 Waterford was the only union free school district in Saratoga County. In 1867 Saratoga Springs was chartered as a union free school district. In 1874 Edwin E. Ashley was appointed superintendent of all schools and principal of the High School Academic Department.



*The 1849 School*

The first recorded graduates from the high school were Mary Scofield and Mary Husted on July 2, 1875. Waterford's first kindergarten was opened on September 26, 1875. It was located on Second Street and was conducted by Mrs. Hall. She advertised it as a "Children's Garden".



*School 3, Dial City*

In 1890 the school building on the northeast corner of Fourth and Division was sold and became the Ormsby Morris Glove Factory. Bonds were issued for \$35,000 and a handsome new three story building was erected on the southwest corner of Fourth and Division on a piece of ground used up to that time as the village burial grounds. This property having been deeded to the Village by the original Dutch owner, John Van Derwerken for a "God's Acre". The bodies were removed to the Rural Cemetery in Northside.

This building became known as School No. One. The basement contained toilets and shop for vocational work, the first floor is given up to kindergarten and primary grades and a gym. The second floor has the higher grades, commercial room, drawing room, domestic-science department, Superintendent's office and teachers' restrooms. On the third floor is the high school department. There were 23 teachers in this building.

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*School 1*



*School 2*

During this time the Waterford school system was composed of three schools; No. 1 at Fourth and Division; No. 2 at Dodgeville or Northside; and School No. 3 at Dial City.

Dial City had a small one story public school located at the corner between the junction of South and Mohawk Streets. It had five grades after which the pupils entered School No. 1. Sarah E. Thurber was the last teacher and taught there until the school closed in 1891.

School No. 1 was demolished in 1965 after having been recognized as the oldest continuously operated high school in New York State.

In 1961 the school district was moved to its present location at 125 Middletown Road.