The Portville Historical and Preservation Society
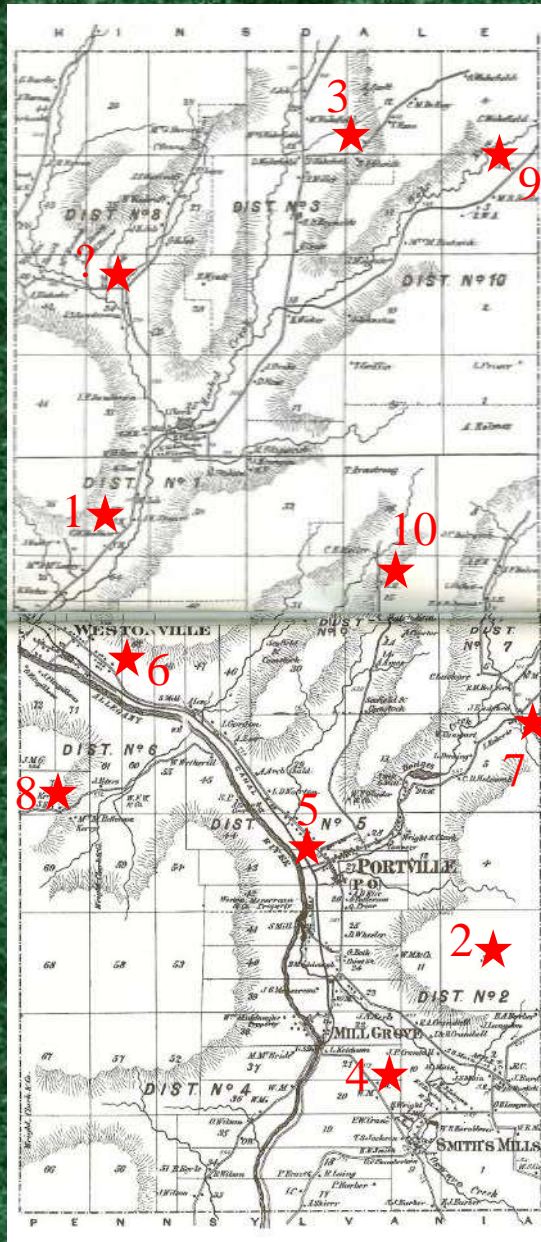
presents

History of Portville Schools
and
Bedford Corners Projects
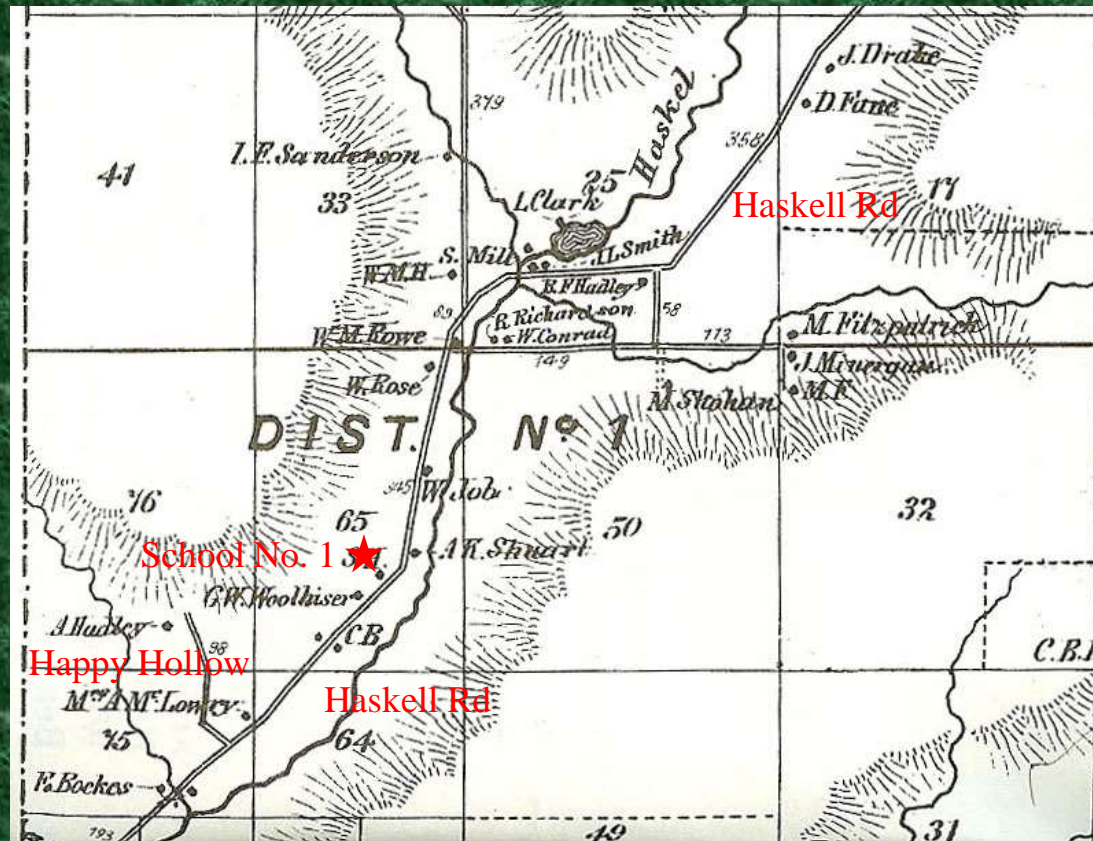
Cindy Keeley
www.portvillehistory.org

Portville School Districts
(1830 – 1950)

- District 1 – Lower Haskell
- District 2 – Main Settlement
- District 3 – Upper Haskell
- District 4 – Mill Grove
- District 5 – Village of Portville
- District 6 – Westons Mills
- District 7 – Bedford Corners
- District 8 – Steam Valley
- District 9 – Wolf Run
- District 10 – Lillibridge

District 1: Lower Haskell

- Established about 1847

District 2: Main Settlement

- Main Settlement School (left) circa 1900 from a newspaper

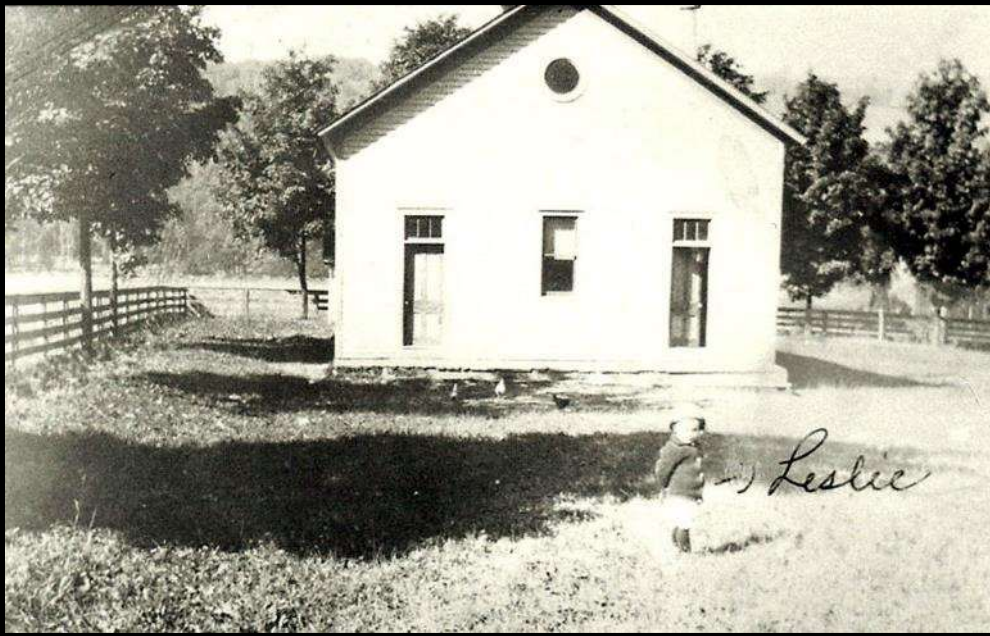- The appearance is much different from this photo taken in 1935 (right)

District 3: Upper Haskell

- At one time, School District No. 3 served the Towns of Portville and Hinsdale (near Jollytown). It was located on the Haskell Road, now the Miller farm.

- Comparing names of students from 1900 (above) to 1931 (left), many names are common to both: Dake, Benham, and Scott. Later, there were also the names Shaffer, Grover, Smith, and Colby.

District 3: Upper Haskell

- Haskell School on Haskell Road about 1888.
- Child in the photograph is Leslie Scott (born in 1885)
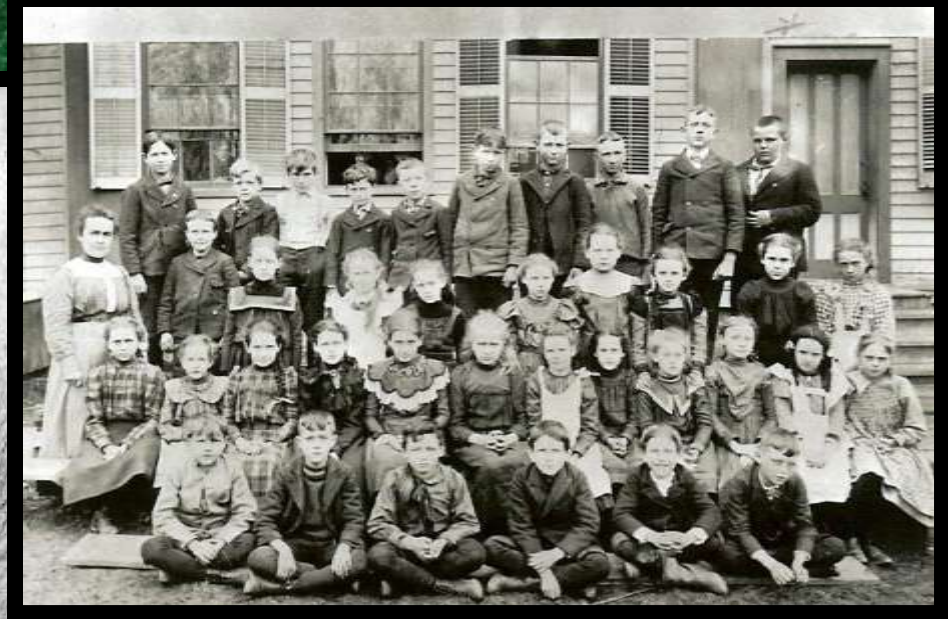
District 4: Mill Grove

- Mill Grove School (left) was located ¼ mile off the Portville-Eldred Road

- Harold "Red" Miner taught school there starting in 1929 when there were 8 grades. By 1939 (right), he was teaching just four grades.

District 5: Village of Portville

- Portville Class of 1897 (above)

- Portville's Union School (c. 1900) on North Main (left) during flood time

Village of Portville

- Maple Avenue Kindergarten School circa 1890 (right)

- Large 1894 Kindergarten Class from this small building (below)

- Now the office of the Portville Historical and Preservation Society and the Chestnut Hill Cemetery Association (right)
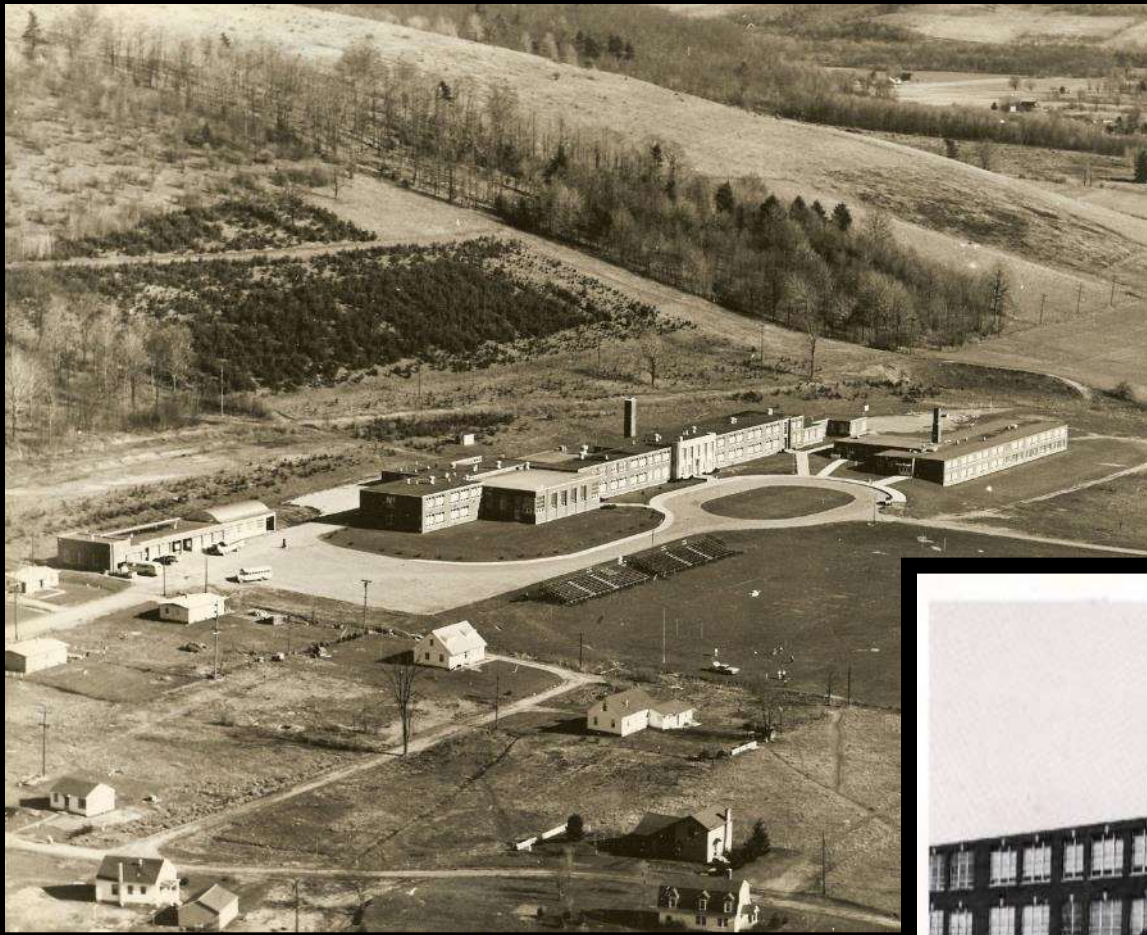
Village of Portville

- In 1905, District No. 5 built a new school on N. Main Street, in front of the old wooden structure (located on the current site of the Portville Manor).

HIGH SCHOOL, PORTVILLE, N.Y. 15.

- About 1922, the school was increased to more than twice its size and continued to function as the primary high school until centralization was completed in 1952.

Village of Portville

- Centralization of the schools was voted and passed 4:1
- Kayes farm was chosen for the new school site for about $12,000 in the late 1940's

Central School, Portville, N.Y.

District 6: Westons Mills

- In 1894, there were 100 students: 42 scholars and 58 primary school students.
- The old wooden school (upper photo) burned down in February 1913.
- The brick school (lower photo) replaced the old school. In the interim, classes were held in the old Free Methodist Church building.
- Both schools, in addition to the St. Michael's Catholic Church, were located on the current site of the Westons Fire Hall and Community Center.
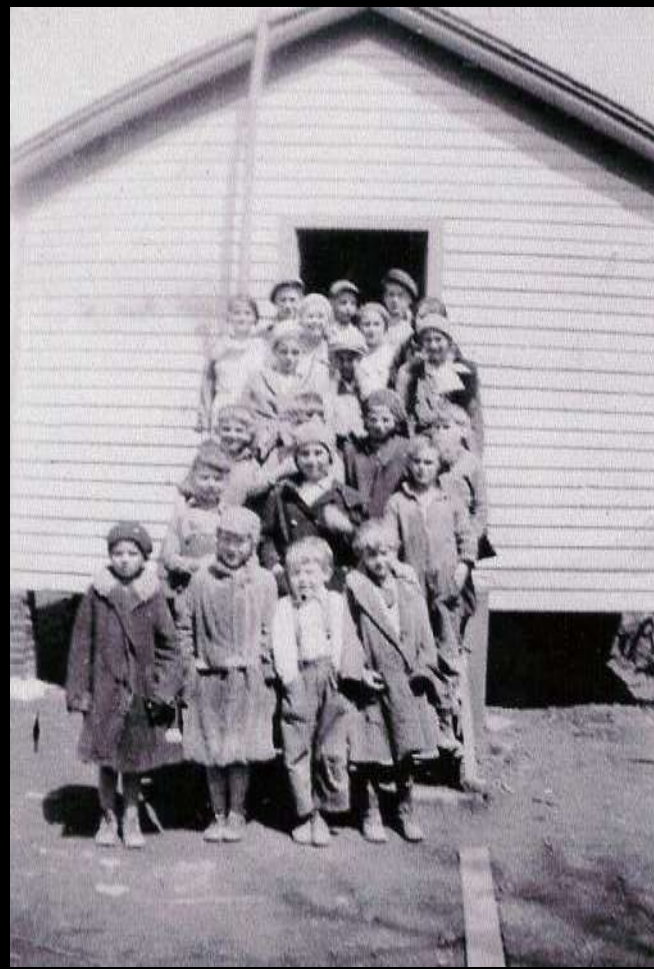
District 6: Westons Mills

- Teacher Elsie Borst Collins (1893-1987) stands with her classes at the far right in the back row. She also taught at the District 10 Lillibridge School. She lived in the home next to the fire hall.

- In 1919, Elsie and Esther Olson taught 23 students – Whitney, Collins, Biehler, Van Dusen, Hollamby, Wetherell, Tillow, Higley, among others.

District 7: Bedford Corners

- Built in 1864, it replaced an older school right next to the Allegany county line
- The land was given by the Bedford family for the new school
- Joint School No. 7 taught students from both Portville and Genesee
- This school was used for classes K-8 until the late 1940's

District 8: Steam Valley

- 1935 Martin Hartwig Long Frederick Shoup Kemp Vanyo
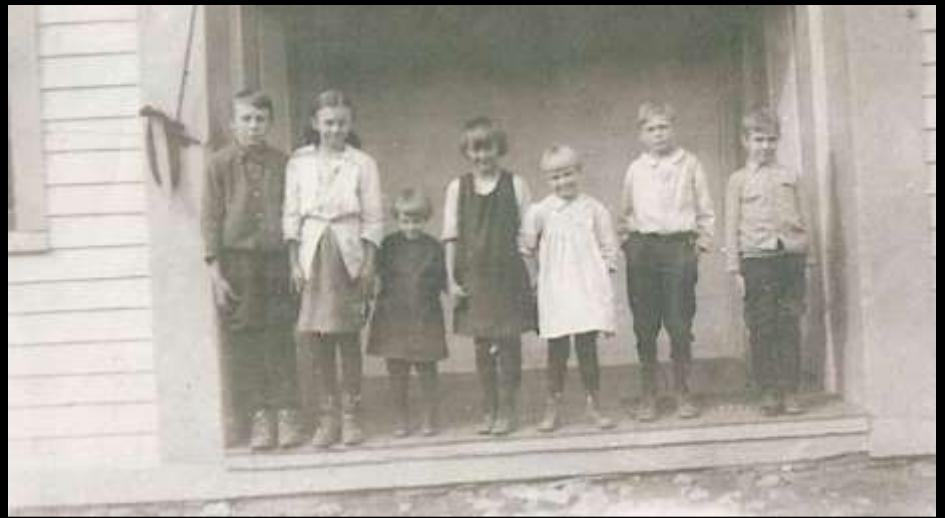
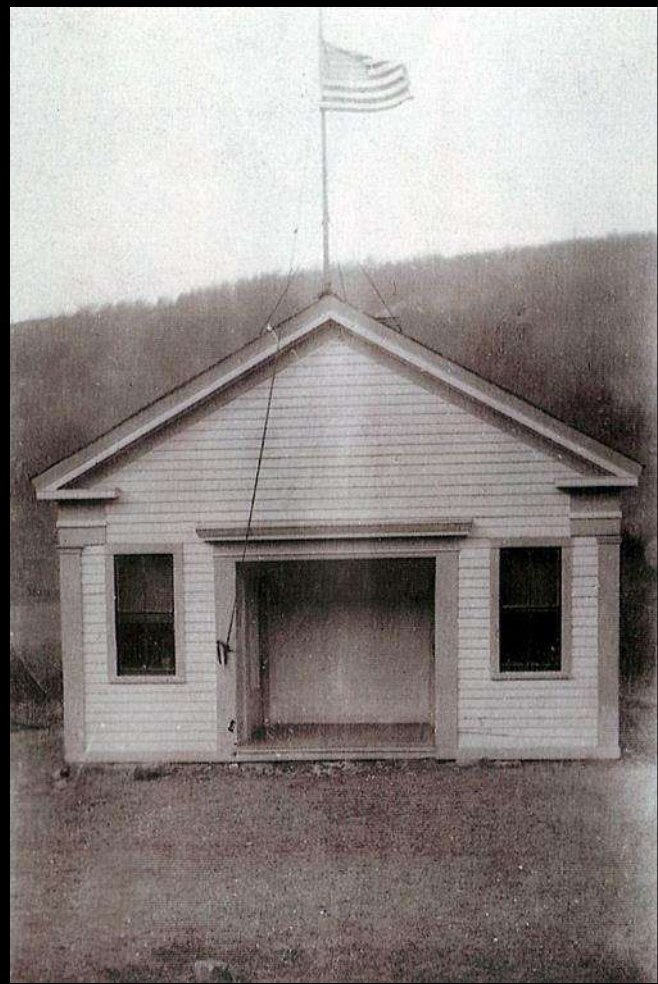- Teacher: Bea Linn Scott Husband

District 8: Steam Valley

- Now a private home owned by a Hollamby family

District 9: Wolf Run

- Established 1882

District 10: Lillibridge

- Students in 1900 included: Ames, Conner, Marshall, Pomeroy, Hatch

Other Neighboring Schools

- Daggett Hollow (upper left) – Clarksville #7
- Deer Creek – Dist. No. 5 (Frair, Hatch, Conable, Benson, Hanks, teacher Ina Hathaway)
- Wolf Creek – also Genesee #5 (Swetland, LaFever, Newville, Thurber, Hubbard, and teachers Jessie Ada Nicholson, Jean Wilklow)

Other Neighboring Schools

- Obi (left c. 1940)
- West Clarksville
- Ceres (below)

SCHOOL AT CERES N.Y.

Bedford Corners Projects

Future Museums:

- Bedford Corners School House
- Cheese Factory / Grange
- Bedford House

Bedford Corners School No.7

- 1965: Charles Eshelman purchased the school house
- 2001: Deeded to PHPS from Col. Eshelman
- 2003: Bedford Corners became Historic District
- 2007: Grant from Cathy Young for $15,000

Bedford Corners School No.7

- Restoration included a new roof, new electrical, new foundation and new hardwood floor for wood shed, bell tower, heating system, attic insulation, new porches and rear stairs

- Completed 90% of the restoration work

- Remaining work is painting and floor refinishing in interior; painting exterior, grading, and new flag pole

Bedford Corners School No.7

Bedford Corners School No.7

Bedford Corners Grange No. 842

- 1886: Built as a cheese factory
- 1927: Became the Portville Grange No.842
- 1971: Purchased by Charles Eshelman
- 2001: Deeded to PHPS from Col. Eshelman
- Limited access until 2010
- 2013: Repaired structural problems, addressed drainage, and installed new roof

Bedford Corners Grange No. 842

Bedford Corners Grange No. 842

Col. Eshelman's Home

- Built about 1860 by Jacob Bedford on land acquired from Henry Dusenbury
- Owned by Eshelman Family since about 1928
- Col. Eshelman purchased it in 1981 from his mother
- Home and property bequeathed to PHPS in 2010

Progress

Before

Now

Now

Now

Now

Before

Our "New" ADA Bathroom - 2014

Before

Now

Now

Now

Before

Now