

# THE SCHOOL AT BAKER'S CORNER

*One of the First Public School Buildings in Rapho Township*

by

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Up in Rapho Township, at the intersection of the Green Pine Hill road with the public road leading from Mount Joy to Mount Hope, stood a log building, which was erected in 1830 as a "temple of learning" for the children of the vicinity.

Before that time schools were conducted in private homes, which were often located at great distances from the abodes of the pupils. The facilities and arrangements left much to be desired.

Before the enactment of the state public school law, Peter Becker and other supporters of popular education, at their own expense, erected the old school near Hossler's Church, a point convenient to a great number of children. Those who helped in this enterprise with materials and labor, besides Peter Becker, were John Brubaker, Michael Hossler, Abraham Garber and Adam Hambright, the latter being the builder. The land had been donated for school purposes by Jacob Hambright.

Among the early teachers of this school were Frederick Baker, son of Peter Becker, Michael Hossler, John Clair, father of John Clair, the saddler of Mastersonville, and others. They were supported by the families of the neighborhood, and this arrangement was in effect until the acceptance of the terms of the free school law by the township in 1837.

Not unlike other portions of our county, Rapho Township had its many opponents of the state's free school system, but there were to be found many champions for popular education. Among the supporters were Peter Brubaker, Thomas Masterson, Christian Stauffer, Samuel Brubaker, Abraham Hershey, James Burns and Joseph Metzler, in the upper section of the township, and the Patersons and the Stricklers in the lower end.

After some years, a new school house was erected near the old log building, on land owned by Peter Reist. About 1846, the abandoned log building was occupied by George Peffer and his wife, Mollie. The old school was now transformed into a "church," for Mr. Peffer, being a man of strong religious convictions, secured ministers of the Evangelical Association to hold services at regular stated times, and the people of the neighborhood filled the small building on those occasions. George and his wife were good business folks, for they had a full line of home remedies for sale. These included "goldendure," peppermint, balsam-demaltha, stinking-tom plaster, drawing plaster and asafoetida, also snuff and tobacco.

After serving various useful purposes, the old school at Baker's Corner was demolished in 1930, by its owner, Harry Doutrich.

In the early days, the cost of tuition for each pupil was two dollars per quarter, or three cents per day. The pupil's outfit cost one dollar, and consisted of an English reader, or a New Testament, Byerley's spelling book, Pike's or Rose's arithmetic, a slate and pencil, six sheets of foolscap paper stitched together, a small ink bottle in a broad cork stand, and a goose quill.

Henry McQueany would say that a young pupil of such a school was "Kinder learned the ordnung fosen, de jun laben warden fered, de mus mon sich eberlosen de the goonse weld regeret."