

# Caledonia, hear us praise thee!

## *An historical account of the Caledonia-Mumford School*

Last fall we ran a very short piece explaining for whom Hamilton Field (Cal-Mum High School football field) is named. In that article, I said that documented information about the field was somewhat scarce, and that I relied on personal accounts from a local family to help me piece together the story.

Soon after that I heard from Mary Cullinan who works as a volunteer at the Big Springs Museum. Mary said that the article had spurred her to investigate the museum's materials relating to Caledonia School history. Mary assembled an enormous amount of historical information chronicling the story of Caledonia's schools, from beginning to present, including not only the various building projects, but also the local community's involvement in school affairs.

Recognizing the amount of hours Mary has dedicated to this, I am very grateful to her and hope all of our readers will enjoy as much as I have the story of our dear alma mater, Caledonia-Mumford School. There is much to write, so we will break this up over a few issues. This week we will examine the earliest school up to the early 1930's.

### Early Schoolhouse

Recorded history dates the first school to have opened in about 1804, most likely in a private home somewhere in the Caledonia area. Miss Jeanette MacDonald operated it. From that point on, it is clear, that the people of this community placed a very high regard on education, and were deeply involved in school affairs such as ensuring the funds for school materials, hiring competent administrators to run the school and attracting good teachers to educate the students. Many of these written accounts published in the local newspaper *The Caledonia Era*, and later, the *Caledonia Advertiser*, reflect a deep sense of pride within the community concerning its dedication to education and the school specifically.

In 1815 a new school building constructed of logs was erected on North Street, across from Church Street. A frame structure replaced it in 1819. Just a few years after that, perhaps 1820 or 1825, a two story stone structure was built on Center Street. From the Big Springs Museum's files, an historian writes...

"The desks in this school were around the outside walls, the children facing the wall with benches all around to sit on, girls on one side, boys on the other, with the master's desk and stove in the middle of the room. Many prominent people attended this school, an outstanding character and teacher being Col. Alexander Gordon, whose motto was "Never Spare the Rod." Mr. Gordon apparently used a stick taken from a nearby elm tree to whip the unruly children."

## **Railroad moves schoolhouse to Main Street**

Nearly 30 years later in the early 1850's, the Erie Railroad was constructed through the area and the Center Street school building had to be torn down. It was replaced by a frame building constructed on the north side of Main Street (near our present day Tennent Park).

From a story that appeared in the 1926 Ainodelac, "there were 94 pupils in the upper grade, called the big room, and 70 pupils in the lower grade, called the small room. There was one teacher for each room. School began at 9 a.m. with the lower classes reciting first. They were excused when the teacher finished hearing their lesson. The last classes were often not excused until 5 p.m. With little blackboard space, blue paper was tacked around the room and used as a blackboard. The 3 R's were taught, higher algebra, higher arithmetic and astronomy also were taught.

The schoolhouse was built off the ground and in the winter time it was very cold and noisy so the teacher put a wagon load of saw dust on the floor, thus making it warmer and quieter. Sometimes there were more pupils than seats, so the boys had to sit on shoeboxes carried over to the school from a local cobbler, William Gibson's, shop."

## **Four-room brick school replaces old building in 1876**

This building was later torn down and replaced in 1876 with a four-room brick structure on the same site (near the present little league field at Tennent Park) at a cost of \$10,000. (See picture of 1876 school).

According to legend, the bricks of the 1876 school were made by a brickmaker, imported by William Hamilton, to make the material for his house on North Street. Several years later, Silver John McNaughton, while on a visit to Inverness, Scotland, dug up and brought back with him, several roots of Scotch ivy and planted them around the school foundation. When the front section was added to the structure (around 1913, now the Big Springs Museum), some of the roots were transplanted on both sides of the main entrance.

## **Caledonia High School organized**

By the late 1800's the enrollment included students from the primary grades through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In 1898 the school was organized as a high school by trustees F.W. Walker, chairman, R.M. Place, clerk, Joseph Donohue, Charles Deichman, Jay Bostwick, W. J. Williams and Frank Perhamus. Ara Wilkinson was the first principal. The story continues....

"Where the baseball games are now held there was once a large pond with islands, boats and little bridges. In wintertime, this was a fine place to skate. There was a sailboat, the Heatherbell, always ready to take the boys and girls out riding. "

## **Additions made to growing Caledonia High School**

**Additions were made to this building in 1904 and 1913. Homemaking and commercial subjects were added. A full time music teacher was hired and improved lighting and heating facilities were completed. Men were added to the faculty and athletic activities began. The Caledonia baseball team became Livingston County Champions in 1925 and the football team played through the season undefeated.**

**The school paper, The Elm, printed its first issue in 1930 and in 1931 the school colors changed from orange and purple to our familiar maroon and white.**

**All of this advancement in the way Caledonia's students were educated could not have happened without a dedicated and supportive Caledonia community.**

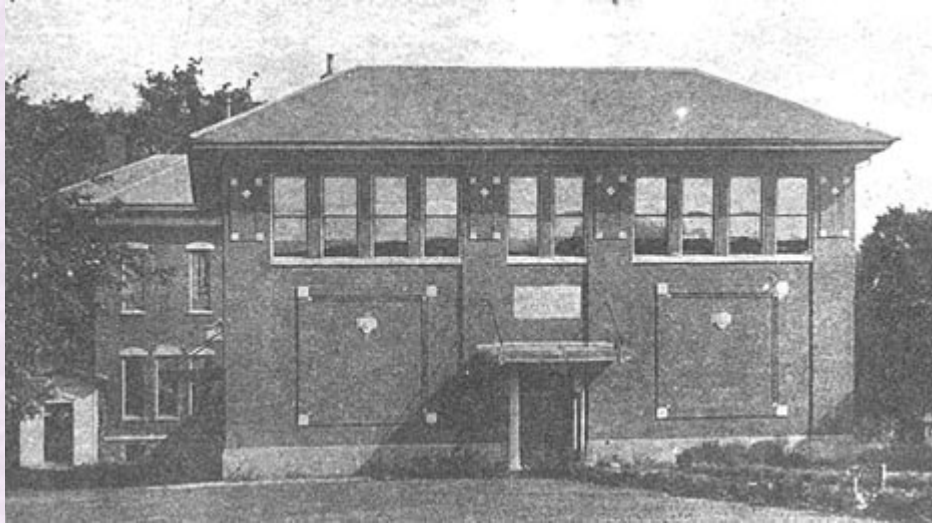
**An excerpt from an unsigned editorial in the local newspaper...."The high school building of a town is usually pointed to with pride by every interested citizen and is given a place of prominence and importance in the laying out of a village."**

**From the Caledonia High School Catalogue, August 16, 1897...."The people of Caledonia have good reason to be proud of the building, which the school now occupies. It is modern in equipment and furnishing, well lighted and heated. Much credit is due the Board of Education and all others who have worked for improvements, for the most excellent results accomplished."**

**Next, Caledonia High School begins to outgrow its space on Main Street. Will they erect more additions to the building or will school officials and the voters look for a new site?**



**Caledonia School building circa 1876, located on Main Street in Caledonia, near the present Big Springs Museum-police station buildings. It cost the taxpayers \$10,000 to construct this four-room school building that opened for a first term in January 1877 with four teachers.**



**This photo shows the addition made to the original school building. This is the view facing south, Main Street. At this point the school is still called Caledonia High School. Centralization had not come about as of yet.**

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## **PART II**

### **Caledonia Hear Us Praise Thee!**

**From the time of Caledonia's early one-room schoolhouse in the early 1800's to the beautiful brick structure constructed on Main Street in 1876, two things are clear. A steady increase in student population caused a need for a larger school facility, and the community responded by supporting the construction of additional buildings. Placing a high value on education, Caledonia residents, have over the decades, been keenly interested in maintaining and expanding a quality education for the youth of this community.**

### **District No. 5 Plans New School**

**The need for additional classroom space became an issue for the Caledonia School Board and the voters again in the early 1930's. The Caledonia Union Free School District No. 5 had**

simply outgrown its present facility on Main Street (presently the Big Springs Museum) despite two sizable additions over the years to the original 1876 structure.

According to a Caledonia newspaper clipping dated 1937, the voters of the district turned down a school building proposition in 1932 because they weren't convinced that the old building wasn't sufficient for students. Additionally, voters were cautious about spending such a large sum of money, approximately \$222,000. But by 1936, with the possibility of aid money from the PWA (Public Works Administration of the Federal Government), voters reconsidered the building proposition. From a 1936 Caledonia newspaper...

"Between 40 and 50 duly qualified voters of Caledonia Union Free School District No. 5 met last Friday evening in the school auditorium to discuss a proposition which provides for the construction of a new building with the aid of PWA funds."

The building was estimated to cost \$222,000, with the PWA providing 45% of the cost or \$100,000. The district would need voter approval to bond the remaining \$122,000. The proposed new building was to be constructed near the present school on Main Street but would face North Street (probably near the present Cal Branch/Dr. Heuer office building and backing up the present Big Springs Museum). The school board was not sure what they would do with the present school, perhaps leave it in tact or torn down later.

### **Promise of PWA Funds Helps Voters Approve New School**

A strong campaign to educate voters ensued. The school board held meetings explaining the estimated cost of renovating and expanding the present building as opposed to building a new school. Early in January of 1937 the voters once again went to the polls in the school's study hall room to decide the fate of a proposed new school, requiring voter approval to bond \$140,000, the taxpayers share of the project. Voters overwhelmingly approved the project; 281 votes were cast in favor of a new school, 37 voters opposed the project.

In an August 1937 Caledonia newspaper clipping, the article stated that the project called for a two-story building complete with a boiler and storage room, agricultural shop, offices, auditorium, gymnasium, library, cafeteria, homemaking room and locker room. The updated estimated cost for the new school was now at \$245,000, with an estimated 45% aid from the PWA.

### **School Board Receives Generous Offer**

Initial construction on the new school was about to begin on the Main/North Street site in September 1937 when the school board received an interesting offer from a prominent citizen, Mr. Wilson Hamilton. The letter to School Board President John G. Ball from Mr. Hamilton read:

"In memory of my father, William V. Hamilton, I hereby offer to convey to Union Free School District No. 5 of Caledonia, New York, thirteen acres of land out of the land owned by

me fronting on North Street in the Village of Caledonia. This offer is made upon condition that the District build the proposed new school house thereon."

This piece of land was located approximately three quarters of a mile further north on North Street, outside of the business district site where the voters had already approved the new school to be built. However, the school board responded by informing the public that "the school board is powerless to act" on Mr. Hamilton's offer. According to state education law, the district was bound to abide by the approved vote to construct the new school on the present site. It was proposed by the local newspaper editor to circulate a petition among the voters to determine if there was enough interest to revote the building project on the Hamilton land.

### **Voters Reject Hamilton's Offer**

In November of 1937 the district held a special meeting for residents of District No. 5 to consider Mr. Hamilton's offer to donate 13 acres of land on North Street for the purpose of building the new school. Board President Ball presided over the meeting that ended in a motion to vote by ballot whether to accept the offer or not. The polls were kept open until 9:30 p.m. when the final count was announced: 183 No votes to 135 Yes votes, 1 blank. The "No" majority meant that the voters had rejected Hamilton's offer and the school would be built as originally planned near the existing school and extending east to face North Street. In a letter to the editor published the week after the offer was voted down, a Mr. Thomas Coulthard of Spring Street in Caledonia writes,

"In my opinion the people of Caledonia are lucky the referendum went as it did last Friday night. It would have been an outrage for the tots from the west end to have to walk half way to Mumford in the winter with snow and traffic."

### **Water Trouble Plagues Construction Site**

The voters had spoken but the school board's troubles with getting the building started were not. In late December 1937, the district's architect ceased all excavation work at the site when workers discovered poor soil conditions, so poor that a foundation could not be put there. Workers had hit water and the architect estimated that the cost to continue building on this site was going to soar.

The Board of Education again called a meeting of the qualified voters to discuss reconsidering Mr. Hamilton's offer in light of the new development on the approved site. The Board immediately contacted Hamilton who stood by his offer, reiterating the offer was a memorial to his father, W.V. Hamilton. Board President Ball presided over the meeting held at the school and attended by about 250 people. The architect explained to the taxpayers what poor building conditions they encountered and apologized for having initially recommended the site. The Board of Education accepted the architect's recommendation to abandon the present school site and move the school somewhere else. By a show of hands, the taxpayers in attendance also voted to abandon the site.

## Board and Voters Reconsider Hamilton's Offer

The district had two alternatives; accept Mr. Hamilton's free offer of 13 acres of land on North Street, or proceed to purchase 15 acres of land on State Street from Charles Place for \$5,000. Of course, this time the architects performed tests on the soil at both sites before the district decided on either location. The State Education Department made the decision a little easier for the district when word came from Albany that since the North Street property was being acquired free (the State St. property would cost the district \$5,000), the district could vote only on the North Street property, not the State St. property.

Just as you would imagine a controversy of this type to be played out in our present day, this issue caused considerable turmoil in the community. Everyone had an opinion about how this mistake happened. Does the district really need a bigger school? Couldn't the students continue in the present building? Did the district keep information from the voters? Should the new school be built so far from the village? What is all of this going to cost? But just as this community always seems to do, they pulled themselves together and made their decision based on what would provide the best education for Caledonia's children. On January 14, 1938 the voters once again went to the polls and approved the North Street site, free land from Mr. Hamilton, by a vote of 220 Yes to 76 No.

## Pupils Parade to New School, Ceremony Marks Cornerstone

The community and Board of Education were proud of their accomplishments and construction on the new school was finally underway. The district planned an impressive ceremony to mark the laying of the cornerstone of the new building. On a warm June afternoon in 1938, the Caledonia High School Band led a parade of pupils from the present school on Main Street to the construction site of their new building on North Street. The program at the new site included the band performing "America the Beautiful," an invocation by Rev. D.C. MacLeod, remarks by a PWA representative (the branch of the federal government supplying aid for the project), and a speech by School Superintendent J.C. Foote, Jr. Harry Annin, President of the Big Springs Historical Society presented a sealed box containing historical documents, a copy of the Caledonia Advertiser, Ainodelac, and the signatures of every pupil of the Caledonia School District No. 5. The box was sealed in the cornerstone of the community's new school.

School officials hoped the new building would be ready in September 1939 for the start of the new school year, however the long awaited new Caledonia School opened in October 1939 with the largest student population in Caledonia's history.

*click on photo to enlarge ....*



## **Caledonia, Hear Us Praise Thee**

The following information was taken from Esther M. Hayward's "Caledonia, A History of the Town and Village."

As we learned in the second series of Caledonia, Hear Us Praise Thee, it was with much controversy and several set backs that the Caledonia School District No. 5 built a new school. The school building was erected on North Street on property donated by Mr. William Hamilton. The building cost \$240,000, \$100,000 of which was federally funded with WPA money. The taxpayers picked up the balance of \$140,000 that was paid off in the 1962-1963 school year. The school opened in the fall of 1939 with 218 pupils in grades one and two, 216 students in the higher grades. Presently, this building is our Caledonia-Mumford Elementary School, housing students in grades K-5 with an approximate enrollment of 650 pupils.

Other interesting facts from the timeline include:

- 1940 – The school cafeteria opened.
- 1950 – The Central District was established, and an addition to the school is planned.
- 1951 – Kindergarten is held in a house on McKenzie Place.

"On February 17, 1952, it was voted to build an addition to the new school on North Street. Construction began on April 15, 1952. The building was occupied on September 9, 1953. The addition cost \$880,000, the garage that was also built behind the school cost \$80,000. The total project costing \$960,000. The addition was dedicated on November 13, 1953."

- 1953 – The new school is dedicated, the Mumford School closes, busing began. Students from Mumford and Clifton transfer to Caledonia.
- 1962 – PTA is organized.
- 1963 – A new high school is built, occupied by students in 1965.
- 1965 – The last graduation is held from the first school on North Street.
- 1976 – The old school on Main Street burns and is taken down.
- 1987 – The Caledonia-Mumford PTA is reorganized.

## **ADDITIONAL MUMFORD SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Superintendent of Schools David Dinolfo forwarded this information to me from the history files at school. Again, the information is taken from the late Esther Hayward's history book.

"In 1803, a log school house was built by the Scottish settlers in "Mission Corners." This was south of the Oatka Creek Road, and west of the bridge over Oatka Creek. It was the first school house built west of the Genesee River. It also housed the Caledonia Presbyterian Church which is the oldest living church west of the Genesee. This site is marked today with a



**boulder and flag pole just north of the bridge over Oatka Creek, at the intersection of Route 36 and Scottsville-Mumford Road."**

**In a conversation between Mr. Dinolfo and myself concerning the school history series, I shared with him the "chilling stories" that the Mumford students recall about walking to school in the wintertime and having to cross the bridge, the top of which was no doubt 20 degrees colder than the flat land. Interestingly, Mr. Dinolfo remarked, "What bridge?" Ay, yes, the dreaded Mumford bridge, as it was called, is no longer located north of the fish hatchery near Burnwell. It must be about five years since the decrepit bridge was demolished by the New York Department of Transportation.**

**For the newcomers to our area, there was for many, many years, a bridge over the railroad tracks on Rt. 36 north that connected our two communities, Caledonia and Mumford. Thanks to a grassroots effort by the citizens of the area, the bridge, slated for repair, was instead demolished and replaced with lighted railroad signals and crossing bars. Since it's removal, many folks have commented that it makes the two communities seem even closer together. That is true, however, the people from Mumford will not likely forget their daily walk over the bridge to and from school.**

**"The first Mumford School was located on the corner of Williams and Dakin Streets and opened in the 1820's. In 1832 a one story stone structure was built between the first school and Main Street. The brick school on Dakin Street was built around 1860, originally one room. At the turn of the century, around 1902 – 03, a second room was added along with four more teachers. At this time the sixth grade and all the high school students were in the library. In 1950 Caledonia School centralized and over the next three years all the Mumford students, along with those from Clifton were gradually transferred to Caledonia."**



**This boulder and American flag mark the site of an 1803 log school house in Mumford at the intersection of Routes 383 and 36 North.**

*click on photo below to enlarge ...*



**CMCS era 1955**

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## PART IV

### Clifton "kid" recalls coming to Caledonia School

Lynn Sackett, a Clifton resident who recalls attending the rural school there until his transfer to Caledonia, sent the following information to me. Lynn was a member of the first senior class to graduate from Caledonia-Mumford Central School. Centralization took place at Caledonia in 1950.

For those of our readers who may not know, the "new high school" that Lynn refers to here is the current middle school building. I have been told that it was indeed a battle to get the building passed and built. Thank you Lynn for answering a question that many of us have been trying to answer and that it is the location of the former football field, before Hamilton Field existed. Someone said they thought that the field was where the middle school is now. You have confirmed that. It is interesting however, given the long standing tradition of Raider football, that the voters allowed the district to begin constructing the school before they had a new field in place. Caledonia played their home games in LeRoy for a while, imagine that! Thank you Lynn and Joyce Sackett for taking time to share this information with our readers.

### Clifton students come to Caledonia

Clifton school was a 2 room school, grades 1-4 and 5-8 with two teachers until the fall of 1945. At that time, Clifton went to one teacher; grades 1 through 6 and the 7th and 8th grades went to Caledonia School. I was one of four that came to Caledonia. We were the first class to graduate from CMCS in June of 1951. I think we had 30 in our class. In 1953, the Clifton school closed and all the kids came to Caledonia. Later that year, the school was sold and is used as a home. The school bell that was in the bell room is now mounted in front of the new firehouse in Clifton by the flag pole.

I don't know when the bridge in Mumford was built. I think it was in the 1930s about when the new school was built. When we went over the bridge with the school bus in the morning, there would be 40 or 50 people waiting for the B&O train to go to work in Rochester. There was a steel walk from the top of the bridge to the train station.

When the new high school was built, I think it took 3 or 4 votes to get it passed. There was a big war over it. They voted with paper ballots and it would take 4 or 5 hours to get a count.

The school sits where the football field was when I was in school. They had to build a new football field where it is today. For two years, Caledonia played their home games in LeRoy. Hard to think Caledonia didn't have a football field for two years.

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## PART V

It has been a pleasurable stroll down memory lane looking at the history of the Caledonia, later the Caledonia-Mumford School District. We left off by telling you that a new school was built north and east of the present elementary building. It opened to students in grades 7-12 in the fall of 1965. That building is the present middle school and is also the main auditorium where Cal-Mum's larger productions, such as concerts and the musical, are held.

Caledonia-Mumford remained a two-building school district from 1965 until the new high school was built and opened in 1998 for students in grades 9-12. At this time, the 1965 building was formally dedicated as a middle school, housing students in grades 6-8. The bus garage located just east of the elementary building was converted to the district office housing the superintendent, his secretary, the business administrator, district clerk, and the special education office.

So much has changed at Caledonia-Mumford Elementary, Middle and High schools. To meet New York's higher standards, students are faced with rigorous courses and challenging schedules.

Nevertheless, much of what school is all about, forming friendships, making memories, and gaining valuable experience, is still very much the same. From the 1946 *Ainodelac* and a 1948 edition of *The Elm*, the school newspaper, we want to share some interesting facts and amusing quips. Carol Brown, Caledonia High Class of 1949, loaned me these items.

### 1946 *Ainodelac*

Caledonia's 23 member faculty included these familiar names: Mr. Robert Freeman, Mrs. Ama Root and Miss Theo Rossney.

There were 33 graduates in the Class of 1946.

There were seven members in the National Honor Society; six females and one male.

**School Clubs - Assembly Committee, Girls' Octet, Latin Club, Metronome Club, Dramatics Club, The Elm staff, Press Club, Science Club, Model Makers' Club, Library Club, Home Making Club, Pep Team and Athletic Association.**

**Caledonia High had a 26-member marching band, a 32-member senior chorus and a 41-member junior chorus.**

**Athletic teams included a football squad, a JV and varsity basketball team, a baseball team, and Varsity C.**

**WWII was raging in Europe but the young, ambitious students of the Class of 1946 were determined to do their part for our country. Taken from the class history printed in the Aindodelac we read:**

**"It was said that our class was more ambitious than our worthy seniors, so we determined to let everyone know it. We set about trying to reform the school - campaigns for cleaner drinking fountains, three mirrors for the girls' room and an assembly on "etiquette." Poor St. Patrick even came under our wing when we held an assembly in his honor. Since this was the time when scrap metal was scarce, we sponsored a dance, the price of admission being a piece of metal. We had Mr. Hitler hanging by the noose with oodles of scrap surrounding him, and this proved to Prof. Ostrander that we could really do it."**

**In their class will, the students wrote bequeaths to the high school faculty members. Among them...**

**"To Mrs. Keith, our sincere thanks for being the grandest English teacher we ever had."**

**"To Mr. Melville, a band that will surpass all other schools."**

**"To Mr. Freeman, the hope that his future will be a rosy one."**

### **The Elm, October 1948, Vol. 19, No. 1**

**On the subject of school spirit, Editor Elizabeth Wilcox writes,**

**"Each and every one of us can help make our school activities surpass all others by being much more enthusiastic than we are now. Let's have as our motto..."We only get out of our school what we put into it."**

**Features in The Elm included Girl and Boy of the Month, sports news, news about class activities and a gossip page. The "I'm Thankful" page allowed students to share what they are thankful for. Here are some of their quotes:**

**"For LeRoy or anything with red in it."**

**"That I'm happy and can enjoy life."**

**"For a little town named Clifton."**

**"That I live in Caledonia and for the many friends I have found here."**

### **The Elm, May 1949**

**From an editorial column entitled "Your School - Is It Yours?"**

**"Your school should be your school. You should participate in every school program where the opportunity arises. You should make every program better than the one before because you were a part of it. Unless you have done that your claim to "your school" is false and the only way for making a correction to an error is to try again. That, students, should be your goal for next year. Be sure in May 1950 to be able to say in all good faith "this is my school and it is better today because I helped to make it that way."**

**Question of the Month: What are you going to do this summer?**

**"Work and have good time."**

**"Work at Doc Mann's Drug Store and eat ice cream."**

**"Work in the Scottsville Pea Vinery."**

**"Work on the railroad, get in the best shape I have ever been in, keep out of trouble."**

**"Work at the theater."**

**By far the most interesting and amusing feature in The Elm is the Gossip page. However, to protect the innocent Caledonia High students who still reside within the area, we will not quote directly from it. Perhaps your parents still do not know what you were up to in those days!**

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## **PART VI**

**Our series, "Caledonia, Hear Us Praise Thee," began in January of 2002 with a look at Caledonia's earliest one-room school house and chronicled the history of the Caledonia – Mumford School District to the present day.**

**The series concludes this week with a look at the three gentleman for whom the Caledonia-Mumford School driveways are named for. Dr. Frederick Hinsdale, Mr. Robert Freeman and Mr. Walter Pennington are very special men in the history of this school district. It was with great pride that the school board selected the names of these men for the driveways, to capture the spirit of Caledonia-Mumford Central School.**

The series cannot conclude without giving credit to the woman who wrote the words, "Caledonia, Hear Us Praise Thee," the first line of our Alma Mater, written in 1926 by Margaret McCabe and sung countless times since then at school functions.



**Mr. Robert Freeman**  
former principal at Caledonia-Mumford

Freeman Drive is the first driveway you meet as you approach the Caledonia-Mumford School campus at 99 North Street from Caledonia. It runs along the south side of the elementary school and is also the entrance to the district offices, the middle school and the football stadium.

Mr. Robert Freeman grew up in neighboring Mumford. He graduated from Caledonia High School in 1932. In 1939 Mr. Freeman returned to the halls of the Caledonia School District as a high school social studies teacher. He was among the first faculty to teach in the district's new school building on North Street, now the elementary building. The United States Army temporarily interrupted Mr. Freeman's career at Caledonia with a tour of duty in the Pacific during WWII. Upon his return to Caledonia, Mr. Freeman, like many other teachers in those days, taught several subjects and also served as a guidance counselor to students and later was named vice-principal. He was an advisor to various extracurricular clubs and coached basketball, track and football. In 1961 Mr. Freeman became principal. With the opening of the new junior-senior high school building (the present day middle school) in 1965, Mr. Freeman continued as principal of grades 7-12 until his retirement in 1977 with 38 years of service to the district. He passed away in 1990. His youngest son John Freeman is a high school biology teacher at Caledonia-Mumford High School.

**Mr. Walter Pennington**  
former elementary principal

Pennington Lane is the next driveway on the campus. It follows the north side of the elementary building and is used by visitors to the playground.



Mr. Walter Pennington joined the faculty of Caledonia-Mumford School in 1957 as a sixth grade teacher. After just six months in the classroom, military service called him away for a year of duty with the National Guard. Mr. Pennington recalls that Dr. Hinsdale held his job for him and he returned to the sixth grade classroom in 1958. For a short time he taught junior high school science. Upon Dr. Hinsdale's recommendation, Mr. Pennington completed

his administrative studies and after ten years in the classroom, was offered the position of Caledonia-Mumford Elementary School Principal in 1967. While he says he loved teaching in the classroom, being the principal afforded him the benefit of getting to know all of the children in the school. Mr. Pennington and his wife Anne started a ski club for elementary students and served as advisor to the club for many years. He says Caledonia-Mumford was a "really nice place to work," and credits a supportive community, the school board and administration for the pleasant atmosphere. He retired as principal in 1989 with 32 years of service to Caledonia-Mumford. Mr. and Mrs. Pennington reside in Lima, N.Y. and enjoy traveling and skiing. The couple returned for the Alumni Day celebration and enjoyed dinner with the Class of 1964 which Mr. Pennington had been advisor to for many years.



**Dr. Frederick Hinsdale**  
former superintendent of schools

**Hinsdale Lane is the driveway on the north side of the campus that leads directly to the bus garage and new high school.**

**Dr. Frederick Hinsdale became superintendent of schools at Caledonia-Mumford in 1951 at the onset of centralization. Students residing on the fringes of the surrounding towns, Mumford, Wheatland, Clifton, LeRoy, and Avon began being bused to Cal-Mum resulting in an explosion in the student population. The beautiful 1939 school building on North Street was no longer adequate space for the district and so a large addition to the school was approved and completed in 1953. As we know, additional schools were opened on campus in 1965 and in 1998.**

**Mr. Charles Collins was the first teacher Dr. Hinsdale hired. Collins taught high school biology, then became vice-principal and eventually principal. Stories like this were repeated many times in Dr. Hinsdale's tenure as one of the things that earned him a great deal of respect was his ability to recognize and select the finest teachers around for the Caledonia-Mumford faculty. Because of his outstanding leadership, Caledonia-Mumford earned a reputation for academic excellence that spread far and wide.**

**In his Alumni Day speech, Dr. Hinsdale himself shared what he is most proud of accomplishing at Caledonia-Mumford, the special education program. Dr. Hinsdale was instrumental in establishing one of the first special education programs for developmentally disabled children in the county. No doubt, the impetus for his determination was his own son who was able to benefit from Cal-Mum's program and complete his education in his home school district. Since then, hundreds of students have enjoyed the same benefit.**

**Dr. Hinsdale retired as Caledonia-Mumford's superintendent in 1981 with 30 years of service to the district. The new high school building was dedicated to Dr. Hinsdale. A**

dedication plaque in his honor hangs in the foyer of the building. Dr. Hinsdale's daughter, Valerie Connor, is now a retired Cal-Mum middle/high school librarian.

Margaret McCabe wrote Caledonia's Alma Mater in 1926. The famous words "Caledonia, Hear Us Praise Thee" is the first line of a three verse melody that continues to stir pride in the hearts of all Red Raiders, past and present.

## *Alma Mater*

Caledonia, hear us praise thee; all hail to thy dear name;

Oh may we ne'er disgrace thee or cause thee any shame,

We will honor thee and love thee, obey thy law and rule,

For none can rank above thee, Caledonia, our dear school.

You have taught us to be steadfast, to be faithful, good and true;

To be honest in our dealings and always loyal too.

These aren't all the priceless lessons we've learned at they footstool,

And for all of them we thank thee, Caledonia our dear school.

When we have left the classrooms, when we are far away,

Fond memories will linger to cheer us every day.

Though we roam in foreign countries, our love will ne'er grow cold,

But we will still adore thee, Caledonia, our dear school.

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**Music from Alumni Day 1999**



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