

## Hereford Forest / Observation Point and Memorial Site 3

### The Little School

#### **Location: The Little School – Owen Road**

#### **The Origin of School Names**

The Little School has had several names over the years. In 1852, it is mentioned in the minutes of the Hereford Township under two names: Andrews School, in reference to the Andrews families, who were numerous in the hamlet of Hereford, and the *Red Schoolhouse* (or Little Red Schoolhouse), since the school was built of wood that was later covered with red brick-patterned paper. In 1934, the back of a school photo also uses the name Everett Schoolhouse, named after Everett C. Gray, who lived on the same lot as the school and served as one of its “trustees.” He lived in the yellow house mentioned at the second stop. Finally, the school is also referred to as District #1, since it was the school for District #1 of the “School Trustees of Hereford.”

#### **The Sale of the Land and the Construction of the School**

The small school is believed to have been built before 1852, on an unknown date. We know from a contract dated 1853 that one acre of land had already been granted to the government for the construction of a school on Lot 13, Range 1. The minutes of the Township of Hereford occasionally refer to the school in relation to its surroundings, so we know it was located near the residence of Ezra Bigelow, who owned part of Lot 13, Range 1 just before Alexander Andrews, around 1853–1854. The school was also reportedly used occasionally by the municipality of Hereford Township for council meetings as well as for posting public notices and summonses to taxpayers.

The only records directly concerning the school date from 1934 to 1969 and were preserved by the Eastern Townships School Board. In 1934, the school commissioners all came from well-known families in the hamlet: Everett C. Gray (chairman), Archie Bolton, and Harold Howe, as well as Walter Leeman Rowell as secretary-treasurer. Two residents of Chemin des Côtes, Elmyra Owen (1939–1940) and her son Ronald (1943–1944), taught there. Other teachers were identified in the archives, including Rachel Elliot Husk, Pearl Anderson, Nina McKelvey, Ruth McDonald, and Mavis Taylor. Around 1935, a teacher’s salary was \$40 per month.

The old Andrews School was not connected to running water; normally, the schoolchildren would go to draw water every day from the spring owned by Everett C. Gray. He died in 1955 while going to draw water from the spring; it was presumed that he had suffered a heart attack. He was found with his head in the spring by the teacher, and not by the children, fortunately.

In 1955, to provide students and staff with greater comfort, the old school was sold for \$200 and rebuilt at 259 Chemin des Côtes for approximately \$12,000. In 1962–1963, the school commissioners sought to have the school affiliated with the Stanstead Central School Board. Between 1964 and 1966, the school faced financial difficulties; it was still unable to repay its loan from the Royal Bank of Coaticook, which had been granted for the construction of the new school. It was put up for sale for \$2,100, the furniture was donated to All Saints Church, and the students were transported to Coaticook. Following the

abolition of local school boards in the late 1960s, the books of the “School Trustees of Hereford” were officially closed in June 1969.

Just like the yellow house, the last owners of the small school before Tillotson Farms & Forests Ltd. were Nellie Carpenter Hanagan and Gayl Carpenter Dowse, the two American sisters and great-granddaughters of Everett C. Gray. The old school was demolished in 2022 due to its dilapidated condition.

### **Other schools in the region**

The typical one-room schoolhouse was found every mill es or two (2 to 4 km) or at every other crossroads. Students attended classes multiviv eaux . In 1861, there were 5 entirely English-speaking schools in the township of Hereford, serving a population of 366 people, a portion of whom were of French-Canadian origin, primarily settled in the areas now known as Saint-Venant-de-Paquette and Saint-Herménégilde.

In 1884, the first French-language school was built in the village of Saint-Venant-de-Hereford, commonly known as Paquetteville (now Saint-Venant-de-Paquette), to serve the French-speaking population.

In 1954, rural schools were closed, and education was centralized in village centers. With the introduction of school busing in the late 1960s, schools began to merge, and secondary education was centralized with the establishment of comprehensive high schools.

### **Cross-border student exchanges**

It is noted that some thirty students from Hereford Township attended the school in Canaan until 1965.

**The teacher’s employment contract from 1910** is surprising by today’s standards:

- Must not be married
- Must never be in the company of men
- Must always be at home between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., unless working at the school
- Must never be in or near the village restaurant
- Must never leave the village without permission from the commissioners
- Do not smoke
- Do not drink wine, whiskey, or beer
- Never ride in a carriage with men other than your father or brother
- Must not wear bright colors
- Must not style her hair
- Must wear two outer garments, including a shawl
- No dress should be more than 2 inches above the ankle
- The school must always be very clean and welcoming:
  - Sweep the floor every day
  - Wash the floor at least once a week with hot soapy water
  - Light the fire in the furnace at 7 a.m. so that the classroom is warm when students arrive around 8 a.m.

### **The language of instruction**

Instruction at Andrews School was conducted in English. At that time, the population of the hamlet of Hereford was entirely English-speaking.

### **Education in a cross-border context**

With well-funded, state-run, and well-regulated American schools within walking distance, Canadians had little need to build their own schools or send their children miles away for an education:

- From 1900 to 1923, along the border between Hereford, Quebec, and Canaan, Vermont, 49 children crossed the border to attend school in Vermont;
- From 1928 to 1965, the number of children in Hereford, Quebec, attending schools in Canaan, Vermont, declined. Although the numbers decreased, it is interesting to note that at least one family in Hereford, Quebec, continued to send their children to school in Vermont until 1972.
- Two families from East Hereford also sent their children to Saint-Albert School in West Stewartstown well into the 1980s.