

Letters To The Editor

School Tales

To the editor:

Classified: Sixteen curious Hardwick Elementary School fifth graders seek willing pen pals to learn about life when fifth graders went to Hardwick's one room school houses!

Rebecca Owen's fifth grade class is going to be studying the history of one room school houses in Hardwick during this winter and spring. They would like to begin collecting information from individuals who either attended, taught, or provided services in any of the one room school houses in Hardwick. The first way they will collect information will be through writing "pen pals."

The students will develop a list of all their questions about what school and life in general was like during the time period of one room schoolhouses and compose letters to their pen pals asking these questions. When they receive responses, they will develop further questions based on what they have learned. A total of three letters will be exchanged (one per week), culminating in a potluck dinner where the

fifth graders will meet their pen pals, share more stories, and offer their thanks. This phase of study will span from mid-January until mid-March. The class will then continue their research through such means as visiting the sites, a field trip to the Cabot restored one room schoolhouse, doing further historical research with community members and studying historical society archives. The unit will close in the late spring with a community presentation of what they have learned.

If you attended, taught, or provided services in a one room schoolhouse in Hardwick, are willing to correspond with a Hardwick Elementary School fifth grader, and would consider sharing a meal with your grateful pen pal in mid-March, please call (472-6846) or write to Helen Beattie (P.O. Box 37, East Hardwick, VT 05836).

Help history come alive for our young people! We hope to have all pen pals identified by Jan. 5.

**Helen Beattie
East Hardwick**

Letter from a fifth grader to her one room schoolhouse pen pal.

Ms. Owens' class
Hardwic Elementary School
135 South main st.
Hardwick, vt 05843

Dear gram Houston,
As you know, my class is doing
a one room school house project, and
I have some questions to ask you.

First of all what subjects did you
learn? And how long did school last?
Did you have to go to school at certain
ages? What ages? When you were in
school, did you ever get bullied?

Did you ever get punished? Why?
What did the teacher do to punish
you? Was he or she strict and punish
people a lot? Were there bathrooms?
How did you get permission to
go?

well, I think that's all for now.
I can't wait for your letter. See
you soon!!

Sincerely
Emily

Some reflections of the community Pen Pals....

- I enjoyed how it made me feel special and a small part of history that I created.
- Since it was my granddaughter, I had a chance to show her I was young once and have wonderful memories of that time in my life - she helped bring it all back.
- My generation learned history from a book in the classroom. You learn history by becoming a part of it - how exciting this must be!
- The ability to communicate with the older generation was wonderful to see. The respect shown to us was especially noticed by all.
- I think it is extremely important to learn about and respect our heritage. This was a unique way to not only teach students a little history, but to make it interesting as well. Great job!!



Student gives his pen pal a rose and a copy of the fictionalized paper he wrote about his pen pal's life in a one room schoolhouse.