



Hebron *Then & Now*

The Newsletter of The Hebron Historical Society

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Upcoming Event
April 18, 7:30 p.m.
At Old Town Hall

HHS Presents
Michael Day
To Discuss:
Education in a One-Room
Schoolhouse: What Was
It Really Like?
For more details, see
our web site.

The Night The Floor Caved In – October 7, 1845

In 2007, the Hebron Historical Society received a document donated by Anna Robinson. (The author of the document is unknown.) The document details a humorous (because no one was seriously hurt) incident in which nearly a hundred Hebronians who had gathered at a town meeting on the second floor of the old Center School suddenly found themselves on the first floor!

Here's how the story goes. According to the document, Center School had a second floor, and town meetings were regularly held there. Center School, built in 1828 to serve a variety of functions, is referred to in early 19th century documents as the "Town House." In 1840, structural flaws were noted, but the Selectmen voted to appropriate only \$5 for repairs, which obviously wasn't enough to do the necessary work.

On October 7, 1845, "an event happened that literally shook Hebron to the very core. The floor of the second level collapsed, precipitating the town voters to the school room below." The document also cites a letter from William Anable to his sister, dated October 14, 1845: "You know they have been holding the Town Meetings in that empty room over the school room. Well... about one half of the floor gave away with the crash of an earthquake and precipitated nearly one hundred men into the school room below.

As the floor was detached entirely from the wall on the east side they were literally heaped upon each other, and those at the bottom were just about suffocated... But for a miracle, not a life was lost, not even a bone broken." The stoic Hebronians promptly adjourned their meeting to the steps of the adjacent Methodist Church, where voting continued as if nothing had happened!

To solve the meeting space problem, the town first relinquished its interest in the "Town House" to the school district (providing that the school district do all the repairs to the building), then rented space in the church, built in 1838, for the sum of \$20 per year.

(continued on next page)



Peters House Restoration: Call for Volunteers

With the exterior restoration of the Peters House now complete, volunteers will be needed to help restore the interior. There will be tasks appropriate for individuals at all levels of expertise. The first jobs available will be the removal of kitchen cabinets, the demolition of some modern paneling as well as added wall partitions, and the removal of tacks & nails from added floor coverings.

Following the demolition stage, volunteers will be needed to spackle, paint, restore flooring, complete wainscoting, re-point masonry, and probably work on exterior yard and garden beautification. For more experienced craftspeople, there will be the opportunity to construct a staircase, to replace boards and molding around fireplaces, and to make other structural alterations. As work continues, it is our hope that individuals from other professional areas (heating/air conditioning, plumbing, electrical work, etc.) will group together to offer their services to the Historic Peters House.

**If you'd like to volunteer, call
Mary Ann Foote at 860-944-3862.**

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Since Methodism was dying out in the center of town, ideas of purchasing the church were bandied around until finally, on January 21, 1863, the town officially purchased it from the Methodists for \$650. The building then became known as Hebron Town Hall.

In the Great Fire of 1882, the Town Hall was barely damaged. Center School, however, was a casualty and was subsequently rebuilt as a two room school house. The structure is currently owned by the American Legion and is sited on Main Street, Hebron, next to the Douglas Library and 50 yards away from the building now called "The Old Town Hall," owned by The Hebron Historical Society.

*-- Written in 2007 by Donna McCalla and adapted for
this newsletter.*



Burrows Hill School



The Gull School

Hebron's Treasures: One-Room Schoolhouses

Did you know that Hebron is the "richest" town in Connecticut when it comes to surviving one-room schoolhouses?

The town once boasted eleven such schoolhouses, and nine are still standing. One-room schoolhouses were routinely sold off to private individuals throughout the state in the 1940's. Five of those nine were converted to private dwellings in the 1940's, three are publicly accessible (the Gull, the Burrows Hill and the Center Schools).

Two schoolhouses, the Hope Valley School and "Pepperidge Academy" (a.k.a. Sumner or Brown School) either burned down or fell into ruin.

***For more information about Hebron history and upcoming events,
visit our web site at www.hebronthistoricalsociety.org.***