

Marion Academy / District #1 Schoolhouse (Site)

HISTORY SHEET

General Information

Name of Structure: Marion Academy / District #1 Schoolhouse

Address: 4036 Maple Ave

Parcel ID: (543200) 65114-12-870555

Atlas: 1853: Academy; 1858: unlabeled, 1874: "SH";
1904: "School" (a replacement for the earlier cobblestone SH)¹

When Built/Mason: 1839

When Razed: ~1893

Why: Unknown; a new schoolhouse was built on the same site

Original Owner: Marion Academy

Subsequently: District #1 School (Board of Regents)

Original Use: Schoolhouse

Subsequent Use: Used as schoolhouse until razed ~1893
(replacement SH is today's Marion Public Library)

Photographs: One known reproduction of original photograph (which has been lost)

Description:

Design Details:

It was essentially a 2-story, 5-bay federal style building. The gable end faced the road; the entrance, however, was on the long side. There were two classrooms on the lower level; the upper level was used for plays, commencements, and other special events. This description is based on the only known photograph. The gable end facing the road had 3 windows up and 2 centered below two of them, the space closest to the front right corner being cobblestoned instead of windowed. The long-side on the lower level had window-door-window-door-window configuration. 4 windows were centered above the lower openings with no window above the window separating the two doors. One internal chimney was on each end.

What appears to be small lake stones were set 4 per limestone quoin. Flat arches of limestone "bricks" appear to form the lintels for all openings. All windows were 12-over-12 panes. Sills were probably of wood.

The lower story of the building appears to be much lighter in hue (black and white photo), suggesting there may have been a work stoppage, different masons, or darker lake stones were chosen for the upper story. Horizontal joints appear to have

¹ This replacement schoolhouse is now the Marion Public Library

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been Vd, no vertical mortar detail can be gleaned from the photograph. The building had a very neat appearance.

Masonry Details:

Details cannot be discerned due to low resolution reproduction of original photograph.

Overview:

Early 19th century schools taught children the essential basics, but the country was quickly being transformed with improvements in transportation and mass production was taking over the traditional ways of providing consumer goods and services. More advanced education was required for this new era. In a period when few high schools existed academies were a frequent option for providing a formal vocational-oriented education. Upon leaving academies young men often entered directly into extended apprenticeships, where they studied law or medicine, or worked on canals or buildings as engineers in training.

The Marion Academy was incorporated in 1839, but like so many other academies, its popularity waned and it was discontinued in 1848. In 1855 the Marion Collegiate Institute was incorporated and began to fill the role of higher education. The cobblestone schoolhouse was put into use as the District #1 school in 1851. In 1893 it was torn down and replaced with a new school on the same site. Ten years later the new building and lot was sold to the Grange.

Very little information about this cobblestone building or details of its use was documented and preserved. Clarence T Wood, and his references to Vera Curtis' writings, provides the only substantial information.

References

<https://nyhistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84035939/1979-06-08/ed-1/seq-8/> Reprinted in Courier Journal, including photograph; and in
<https://nyhistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074234/2007-03-16/ed-1/seq-5/>

THE OLD STONE SCHOOLHOUSE

BY: CLARENCE T. WOOD

MAY 12, 1942

My early recollections of the Old Stone School House began in the spring of 1889, when our family moved from the country in to the Frank Longley house that stood on the west side of the

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Marion-Williamson highway, opposite the home of D. Henry Crane, bought by my father in the early spring of 1889.

From a paper written by Mrs Vera Curtis, and published in the Marion Enterprise, of Friday August 27, 1926, I quote the following:

"March 27, 1839, the Marion Academy was incorporated and the same year a cobblestone building was erected on the site of the present Grange Hall."

From another paper written and published in the Lyons Republican, by the late Mrs Lucy H Mason, I quote the following:

"The marked interest in Marion High School is but the continued expression of the people of Marion along educational lines for seventy five years. In March 27, 1839, an academic school was chartered following a select school in which Morrison Huggins gave instruction in the higher branches. Ornon Archer was the first principal of the old Academy. The building was a stone one afterwards used as a district school, which was replaced in the 90's by a new building that later was purchased for Grange Hall."

And once again, from a paper prepared by Miss Mira Crane, I wish to quote a few lines, this paper was written by her and published in the Marion Enterprise of August 27, 1926.

"March 27, 1839, a charter was obtained for the Marion Academy for which a cobblestone building was erected on the east side of the present Grange property." and again: "This Academy continued until 1851, and the same "old Stone School House" used by District No 1 echoed for many years the droning of the reading lessons."

This definitely, then establishes the date of its first use as a district school and it continued to be used until about the spring of 1891 or 1892 when it was torn down and the present building now used as Grange Hall erected, and used for some years as a school. I remember one teacher in that school, a Mrs Lang.

The old stone school building was built of lake cobblestones set in rows into cement, with door and windows made of quarried rock. The building was divided into rooms, a small one in the south side for the smaller children, and a larger room for the advanced grades.

A door on the west side of the building led into an entrance where coats and hats were left. Along the west wall was the entrance into the primary department and on your left hand as you passed along this entrance was a stairway, that led to rooms above wherein were held at stated times little plays by the pupils and on occasion "last day exercises". It consisted of one large room and two smaller rooms for the actors, who put on the performance.

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Entering the large school room for advanced pupils on your right hand was a platform with the teacher's desk and chair with blackboards back and right of platform, at the end of right hand blackboard was a door leading into the smaller room that housed the younger pupils.

Two lines of desks lined the south side of the room, then two shorter lines of desks, together with a squat pot-bellied stove, taking up the center of the room and said stove in the winter furnishing the only heat we had and at times this was not much on the cold long days.

Beyond the stove on the north side of the room were two more long lines of desks—the Maple Ave side. Back of the lines of seats and facing the east side of the building was a window for each line of desks, but on the Maple Ave side I can remember but three windows.

NOTE: Implication was that the opposite long side had center entrance flanked by 2 windows (this is the side you entered on—the side NOT showing in this photograph).

To the left of the teacher's desk on the west side of the room was a short line of three of four seats from the north to the south of the room, these were usually occupied by what was known as "honor pupils" ...

My seat was usually either in the middle of the first or second row on the south side of the room, from there I could see out on Maple Ave about the level of the upper story of the houses opposite ...

On the east side of the school property was the home of Cy Ferguson, an elderly man, who had a hobby for fine gardens. Well, at one time, the ball diamond home plate faced the fine garden, and most of the balls missed, went over the fence into his fine garden. Naturally, the boys going after them did considerable damage to the crops, and many and long heated arguments took place on the subject. Also Mr Ferguson had a habit of confiscating the balls which fell on his property, and it is said that at an auction after his death, a bushel crate was found in his barn more than half full of baseballs.

Note: Clarence T Wood had no official role as a historian or author. He just had a personal interest in history.

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1904 - 5376.pdf (10/11/1904)

"Grange Buys Hall — Marion, Oct 10 — Saturday afternoon from the front steps of the building, occurred the sale of the district school No. 1's building and lot to the Marion Grange Society for \$1,700. The building is an up-to-date structure, costing \$2,000 only 10 years ago, and is on a lot 120' square on a quiet street, within 100 yards of the business center. The organization of the Union Free School, which obtained possession of the old Marion Academy

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building on Main street, has caused the old building to be disposed of. The grange will build sheds behind the building and use it for a hall."

<http://nyhistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074234/1973-08-09/ed-1/seq-13/> Courier Gazette
BYGONE DAYS—MARION, By Mrs Vera Curtis

... "March 27, 1839 the Marion Academy was incorporated and the same year a cobblestone building was erected on the site of the present Grange Hall.

The Collegiate Institute obtained its charter in 1855, and a school was commenced with ninety pupils in an upper room over a store, now Clark's Block. After forty-five years as the Marion Collegiate Institute, it was taken over by the Board of Education of the Union Free School in 1904."

<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/marion/marioncurtis2.html>

MARION ACADEMY

On March 27, 1839, the Marion Academy was incorporated and that year a cobble stone building was erected on the site of the present Grange Hall. The first principal was Ornon Archer, a graduate of Williams College, who made it a success. There is, in the possession of Miss Mira Crane of Marion, a catalog of the Academy for the year 1841. It gives a list of over 218 pupils including the names of three Indians from the Buffalo Reservation, William Jemerson, Cephas Two Guns, and Peter Wilson. After the retirement of Mr. Archer the school died out and the charter was given up in 1851.

This left Marion without a preparatory school, so Macajah Adams and Edger Galloway secured a young man by the name of Collier from Oberlin College to prepare some of the young people for college. The first class consisted of thirteen, who were taught in the stone building which had been built as the Academy. The Marion Collegiate Institute was a result of this venture, and when that was started, the old stone academy was used as the district school until the wooden building, which is now the Grange Hall, was built in 1893 by Albert Smith.

<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/history/oldacademies.html>

Marion Academy: Incorporated by Legislature March 27, 1839. The board was organized but a defect in the title of the property prevented it from being successful. Simon Archer was Principal. Discontinued in 1848.

Marion Collegiate Institute: Incorporated provisionally by the Regents 7/6/1855; charter declared absolute 1/14/1858.