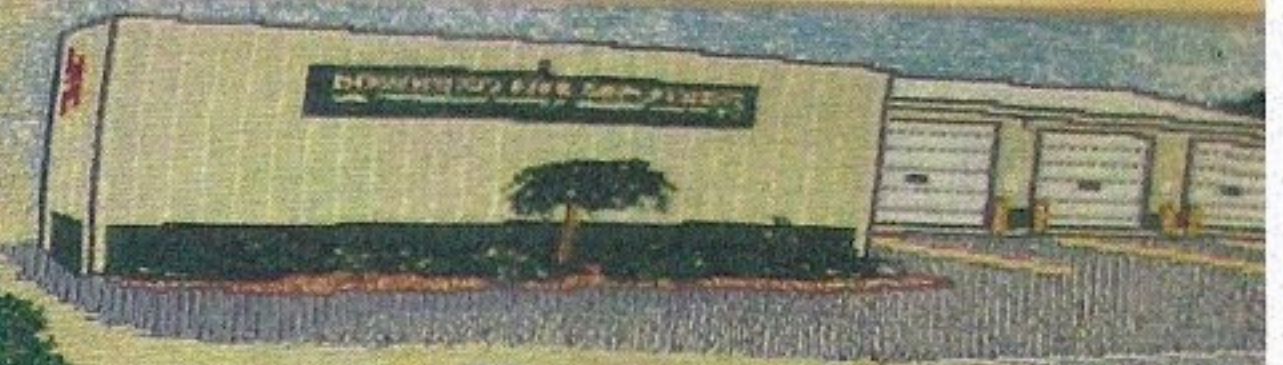
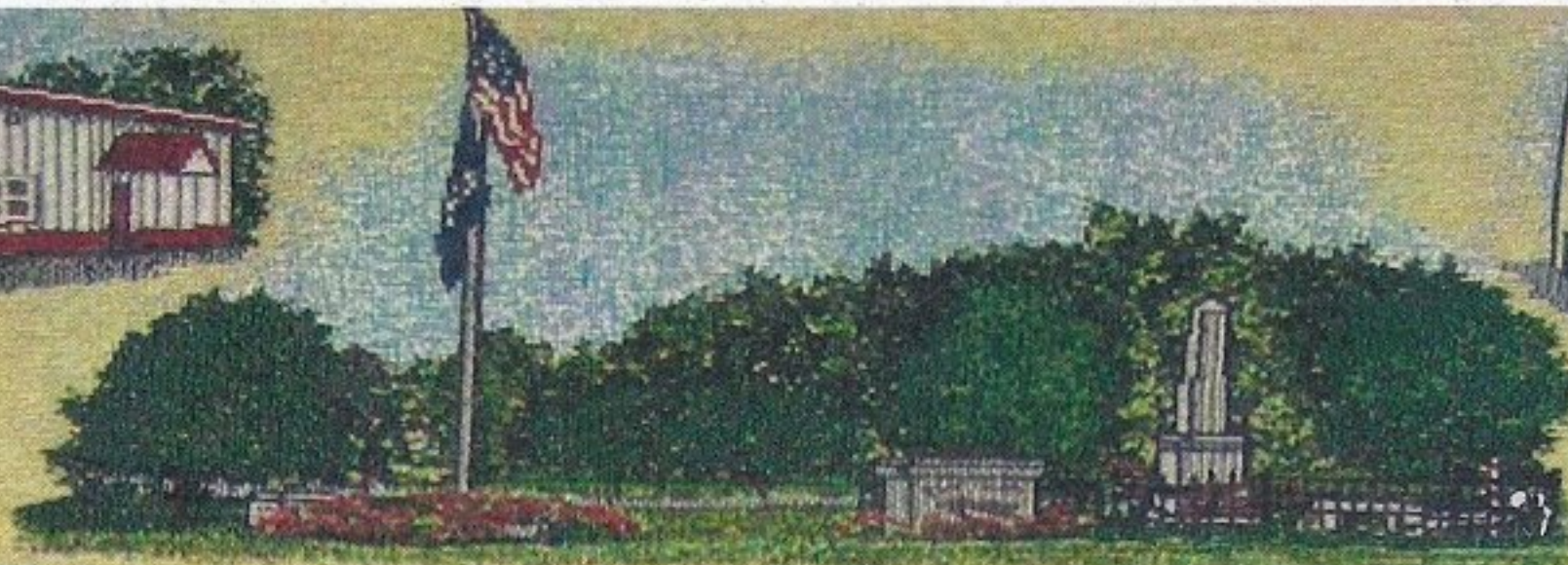




Spafford  
Fire Department  
Fire District formed  
in 1948



Borodino  
Fire Department  
Fire District formed in 1948



Spafford Veterans Memorial  
2004



Grange Hall  
ca. 1830



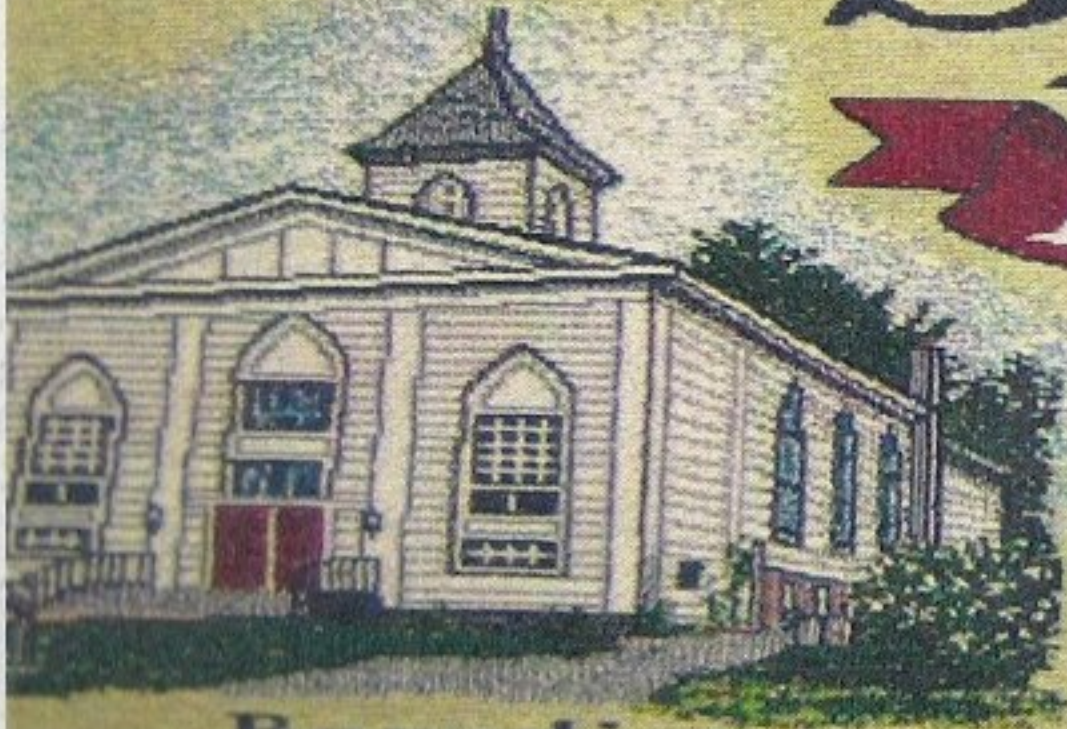
Spafford Town Hall  
ca. 1985



East Side  
Hill School  
ca. 1813

# Spafford

1811 Bicentennial 2011



Borodino  
M.E. Church  
ca. 1853



Bartlett's Store  
ca. 1940



Spafford Union  
Meeting House  
ca. 1840



Borodino Creamery  
ca. 1898



The Puddin' Mill  
1910

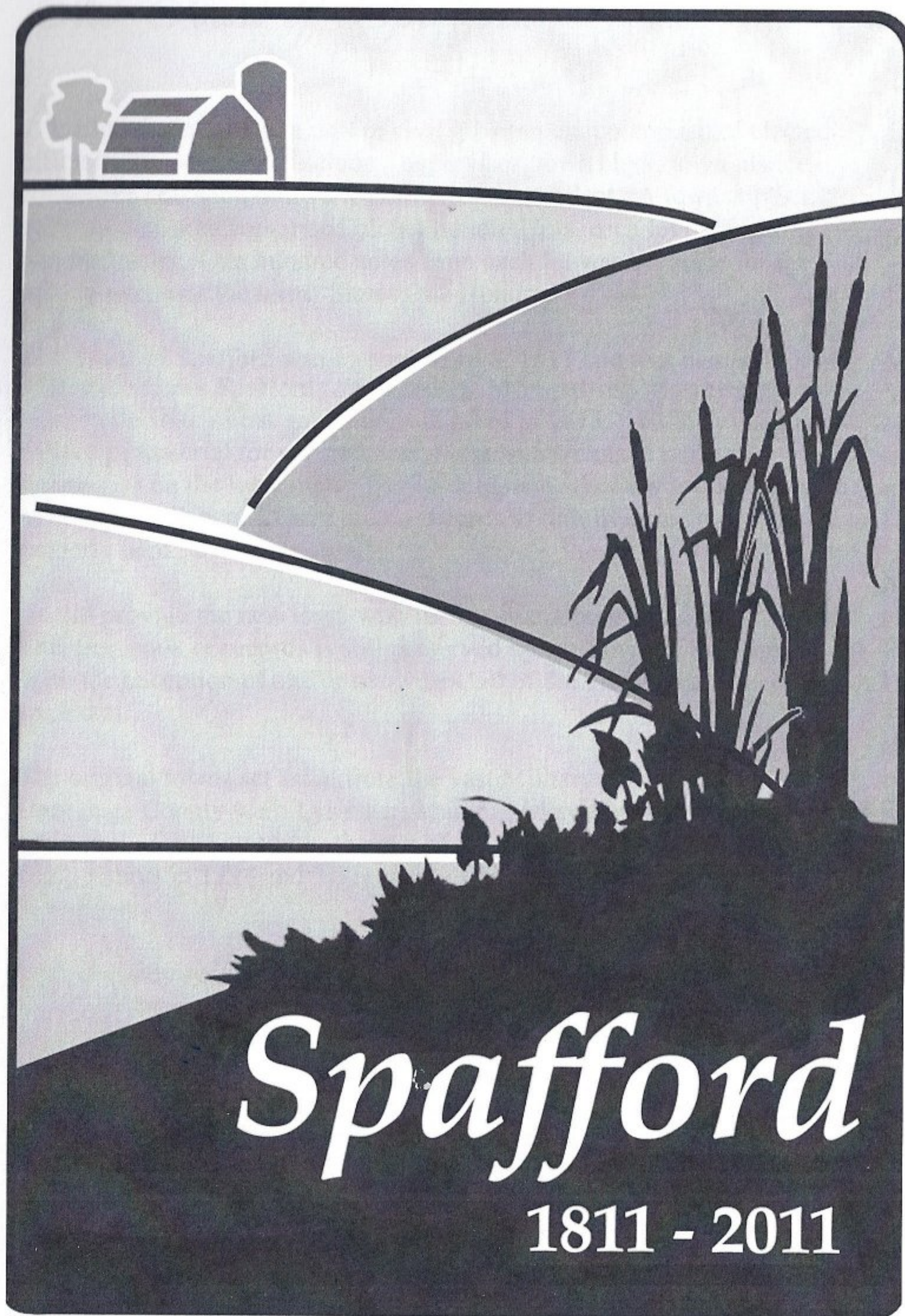


Town of Spafford  
Onondaga County, New York

***“Our Two Hundred Year Journey”***

1811-2011





*Introduction by  
Town Historian*



# *The Town of Spafford*

A town is defined as a unit of civil government comprised of elected officials. Those elected include a supervisor, town clerk, town justice, councilors and sometimes a highway superintendent. A township is a geographical area comprised of one hundred lots, each lot having six hundred acres. One hundred acres from each lot was set aside for the state to use; thus the term "States One Hundred".

The Town of Spafford was formed April 8, 1811 and was named in honor of Horatio Gates Spafford (1778-1832). Mr. Spafford was the author of New York State's first gazetteer, published in 1813. While in the area collecting material for his gazetteer, he must have made quite an impression on the local men. They would name the new town for him if he would settle here. There are no records of him living or owning property here.

He did provide the new town with its first blank book to keep its' records. This first book of records is still preserved by the Town of Spafford. With the exception of one or two years, all of the Town's record books are intact.

The original towns set aside from the vast Military Tract to form Onondaga County were Lysander, Manlius, Marcellus and Pompey. From these first four towns the rest of the towns were created; the first being Fabius in 1798 and Tully in 1803, both of which came from parts of Pompey.

Spafford acquired sixteen lots from Tully, thirteen lots from Marcellus and all of the eight lots that were on the east side of Skaneateles Lake, once belonging to Sempronius.

Spafford is located in the southwestern portion of Onondaga County. Cortland County is its southern border, and is bound on the east by Otisco Lake and on the west by Skaneateles Lake. The Towns of Marcellus and Skaneateles make up its northern border.

The Town of Spafford has more lake frontage than any other town in Onondaga County.

The Town has an area of approximately thirty-nine square miles consisting of rolling hills, deep valleys, farmland, woodlots, lake frontage and streams, the largest being Cold Brook in the southern part of the town. The highest elevation in Spafford is on Ripley Hill, at 1,986 feet above sea level. The population is still under 2000.

Many of those seeking land and settling here were Revolutionary War Veterans. Most were from Eastern New York and other New England states. They were predominantly of English, Dutch, Irish and German descent. These early settlers were farmers, blacksmiths, harness makers, coopers, mill wrights, teachers, doctors, store and tavern keepers, as well as jobs requiring numerous other needed skills.

New York State Militia men were required to carry twenty rounds of ammunition at all times. When the call came from Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Clark, Captain Asahel Roundy, Lieutenant Phineas Hutchens, and about twenty other Spafford Militia men were ready. They left for Sackett's Harbor in the fall of 1814 and served there for about thirty days. The company was discharged at Smith's Mills, NY, on November 22, 1814. Lieutenant Phineas Hutchens later became Colonel Hutchens.

The Free Will Baptist Church on the hill east of Spafford Corners, was taken over in the 1830's by the new Mormon religion. The pastor of the Baptist Church, Elder Gould, was baptized into the new religion and influenced much of his congregation to do likewise and go west with the Mormons. The exact number of people leaving to go west with the Mormons has never been determined. The census records may tell the story. From a high of 2,647 people in 1830, it dropped by nearly 750 people during that ten year period of Mormon exodus from Spafford. Spafford has not regained that 2000 population since. In recent years Spafford has experienced a building boom. How will that be reflected in the 2010 census?



Around 1813, Spafford was divided into five Rural School Districts: #1-Nunnery School, #2-Spafford, #3 East Side Hill, #4-Cold Brook, and #5-Woodworth. Over the years other districts were added or changed, some becoming "joint districts" with the of towns, Marcellus, Skaneateles, Tully, Otisco, and Scott, in Cortland County. Some of these schools remained active until 1956. As the rural schools closed, students from Spafford attended one of the surrounding centralized schools; Marcellus, Skaneateles, Tully or Homer.

In 1803 the first road in the town was built between Borodino and Spafford (NYS Route 41). Opening the first store in Borodino was merchant Daniel Burroughs. Proprietor of the first store in Spafford was Jared Babcock. During the next several years businesses boomed. Saw mills and grist mills opened on Cold Brook—a tributary of the Tioughnioga River. The Factory Gulf site (Five Mile Point) welcomed several enterprises. The Puddin' Mill area at the top of a gulf on Otisco Lake soon became active. There were also grist mills and saw mills on Spafford Creek in Spafford Hollow. Over the years, there were several mills or foundries on The Bucktail, a steep gulf leading into Spafford Hollow, all of which were short lived.

Over fifty men from Spafford volunteered for the Civil War. The first to volunteer was Santa Anna Wallace from Borodino, who enlisted April 28, 1861. Perry Woodworth was a musician. Pvt. Calvin P. Stanton served in a Cavalry Unit, Edmon Durbin (age thirty-two) was wounded in the leg at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. William Nesbit entered the war in 1862 at the age of nineteen. Perry Norton was twenty-one when he enlisted and was wounded at Gettysburg, July 3 1863. William Henry Moon enlisted in 1862 and was wounded at Gettysburg, as well as at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. He was fatally wounded at Peach Tree Creek, Georgia and is buried in the National Cemetery, Marietta, Georgia. There is a list of Civil War Soldiers at the Town Hall, but because most of the men enlisted from towns other than Spafford, we may have missed some veterans. If you have someone to add to the list, please contact the Spafford Town Clerk.

The Town Picnics began in 1885 as the Four Town Picnics, with the Towns of Marcellus, Onondaga, Otisco and Spafford, first meeting at Davis Grove on Otisco Lake. Three years later the Towns of Skaneateles

and Tully joined and met annually for many years for the Six Town Picnic. This was a great time for politicians to get together and meet with the public and give speeches. Besides the food, local bands played and baseball games between towns were held. In Spafford, the picnics were once held at Forest Home on Otisco Lake and at least once at Ten Mile Point now known as Lourdes Camp on Skaneateles Lake. Most often the picnics were at Davis' Grove, Heath's Grove or Lamb's Grove on the east side of Otisco Lake. The picnics were halted during World War 11. They were revised by the local historical societies for a few years in the 1980's.

The telephone arrived circa 1886. From an article in the Marcellus Observer, written by Frank Griffing, who was born and grew up in Borodino, he recalls when the first telephone was installed. The Borodino Band practiced up over the store of Churchill and Eadie on Saturday nights. The band was invited downstairs, and played into the telephone so people in Syracuse could hear them play.

Ed Bartlett was born in Borodino in 1925. His father owned the IGA store and first had a telephone installed in the store and could make long distance calls. Later the family had a telephone installed in their home. Ed remembers the telephones as being about a "ten party" line, each with its' own signal. The telephone was about 30" tall, made of oak and hung on the wall. The hand signal crank was on the right side and a small shelf on the front could hold a note pad. There were two large dry cell batteries at the top. The crank was turned to signal another person on the line that he was being called. The signal could be two short rings or one short and one long ring etc. It was common practice for others to pick up and listen in on the conversations, making it more difficult to hear.

Electrical Power arrived in Spafford in the mid 1920's. Until then people relied on kerosene lamps or lanterns, or later Aladdin lamps which gave a very bright light. Prior to electrical power some households had what was called a Delco system, which used a battery system that connected to a generator that was run on kerosene. The generator was stored in the cellar and exhausted to the outside of the house. They would only provide enough power for lights.



At a special meeting of the Town Board, July 17, 1926, a motion was made and carried that a franchise be granted to the Niagara Lockport and Ontario Power Company for electric lights. August 20, 1927 a motion was made and carried to grant a franchise to Marcellus Lighting Company. December 28, 1927 a motion was made and carried that the contract with the Empire Gas and Electric Company for one 200 watt and four 100 watt lights for the streets of Borodino be approved. By the late 1930's or early 1940's nearly every home in Spafford had electricity.

The 1900's saw the arrival of women's rights and a voice in their government. The first woman to serve as town supervisor in Onondaga County was Mrs. Florence Mc Daniels of Spafford. Mrs. Mc Daniels was appointed to fill the last year of her husband's unexpired term after he was killed in a car crash on December 10, 1924. By virtue of her appointment to serve in 1925, she became the first woman to become a town supervisor in Onondaga County.

In the late 1930's-early 1940's election laws changed the town board from four justices to two justices and two councilmen. Spafford joined the Association of Towns. In the fall of 1937 two voting machines were purchased for the town, costing less than \$2000. By ordering the machines in November/December, the town would get an \$80.00 discount. These are the same lever machines we have been using all these years. It is very doubtful that the "new" machines will last anywhere near that length of time. Spafford did get it's money's worth!

About this same time, several cottage owners on the western shore of Otisco Lake, south of Forest Home and Lader's Point; joined together to build what was to become the "road that couldn't be built", "Burma Road", named for the famed road of World War II. Once only to be reached by boat or a long arduous trek across farm fields, down steep and wooded hills, cottagers now would be able to drive right to most of their Camps.

Town Board salaries per year for 1943: Supervisor \$400.00, Justice and Councilor \$120.00 each, Town Clerk \$400.00, Tax Collector \$200.00, Highway Superintendent \$1560 and highway laborer @.60 per hour.

Mainly through the efforts of Hoyt Ackles, a Soil and Water District was formed in Onondaga County with a five member board. On May 7, 1947 the Town Board approved a Fire District. Two civil defense fire sirens, one for each end of town, were purchased by the town for \$10.00 each.

In 1968 a fire destroyed the Town Highway Garage; 1969 the Town Board approved building a 40' x 80' garage on the original site. The first sub-division in town was the Tracy Tract in 1971. The first Zoning Laws were approved by the Town Board in 1973. In 1985 construction of a Town Hall was approved @ \$48,495.00. The first Town Board meeting held in the new building was on February 13, 1986 and in 1986 the town gave its approval for a historical society to be formed. Harley Cole was elected the first President. In 1989, Barbara Randall was re-elected as Town Supervisor by a "write in vote" beating out both Democrat and Republican candidates. In 1998 an addition of 44'x36' was made to the Town Hall. The Veterans Memorial was established at the four corners in 2001. A three town water district was formed in 2003, with Otisco, Marcellus and Spafford, with Spafford as the lead agency.





At one time nearly every household had cows, chickens, perhaps pigs and a small vegetable garden. The women would harvest and preserve the garden produce for the winter months. Butchering was a common event in the fall. Because of these practices rural America was able to better cope with the depression years. The small dairy farm has nearly disappeared, to be replaced by large "big business" farming. While some of the land is still being used for "cash" crops, much lies fallow. Much of the prime land is now being sub-divided and sold for new home construction. Soon there may be communication towers and private wind mills on the horizon.

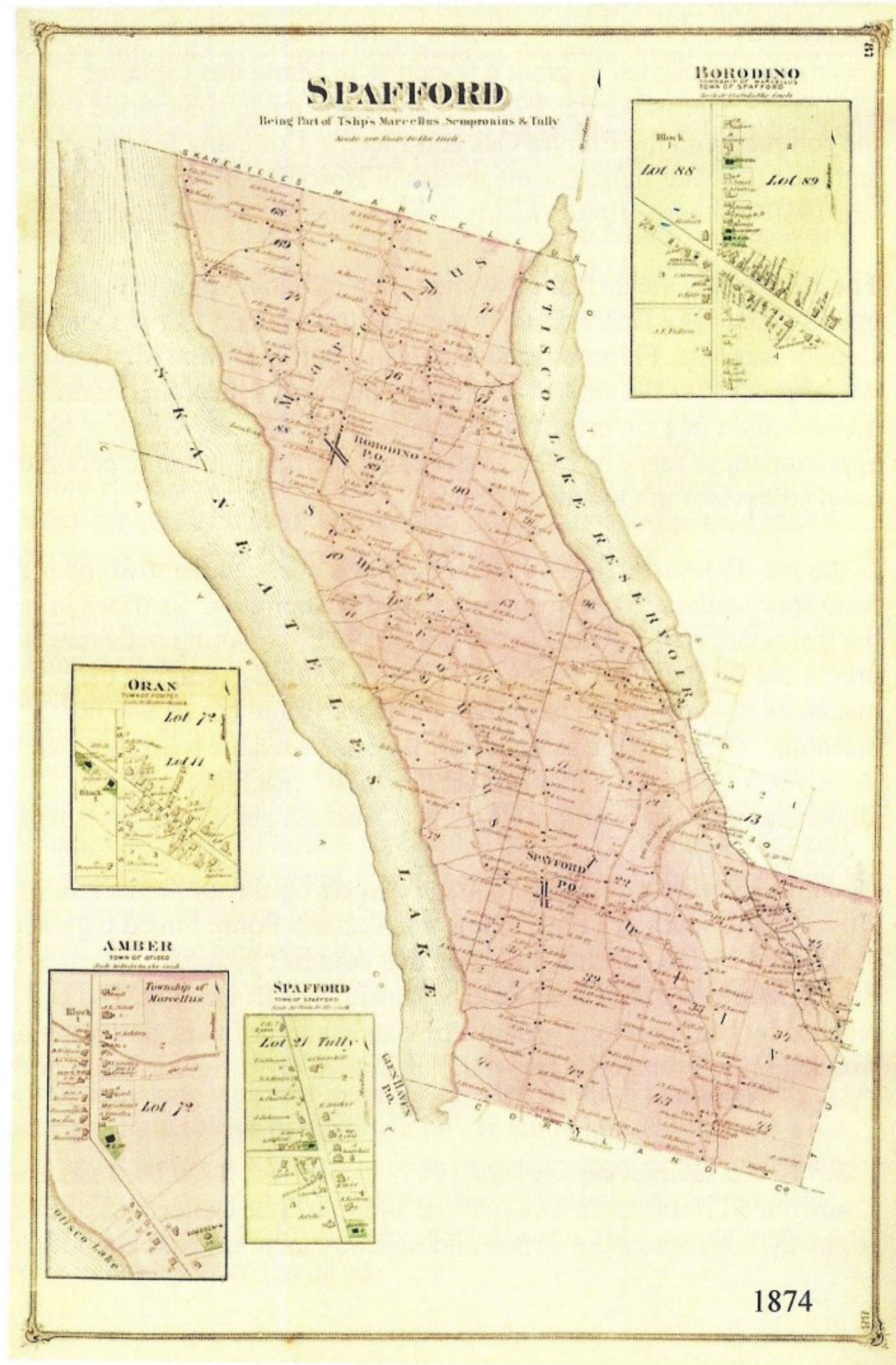
Spafford is still served by four different Post Offices; Marietta, Skaneateles, Preble, and Homer. We have two different telephone exchanges; 315 and 607. Five Fire Commissioners are elected to govern the Spafford Fire District which has two fire departments, Spafford and Borodino. (Dial 911)

Our rural town still has one Methodist Church, a garden club, historical society and several small "mom and pop" businesses. Senior citizens meet twice a month at the Town Hall. The Food Pantry helps to provide for those in need. In 2007, a new year-round Country Store opened on Route 41 in Borodino.

*Barbara Shoemaker, Town of Spafford Historian*

SOURCES:

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- Past and Present of Onondaga County-by Rev. W.M. Beauchamp (1908)
- Gazetteer and Business Directory, Onondaga County- (1868-69)
- Spafford Census Records
- Spafford Records: 1887-to current.
- Skaneateles Free Press-December 12, 1924
- Syracuse Herald Journal-January 25, 1962
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- Memoirs of the 149th NYV, War of 1861, by Capt. George K. Collins (1891)
- The Burma Road Story, Jane Amidon, 2000



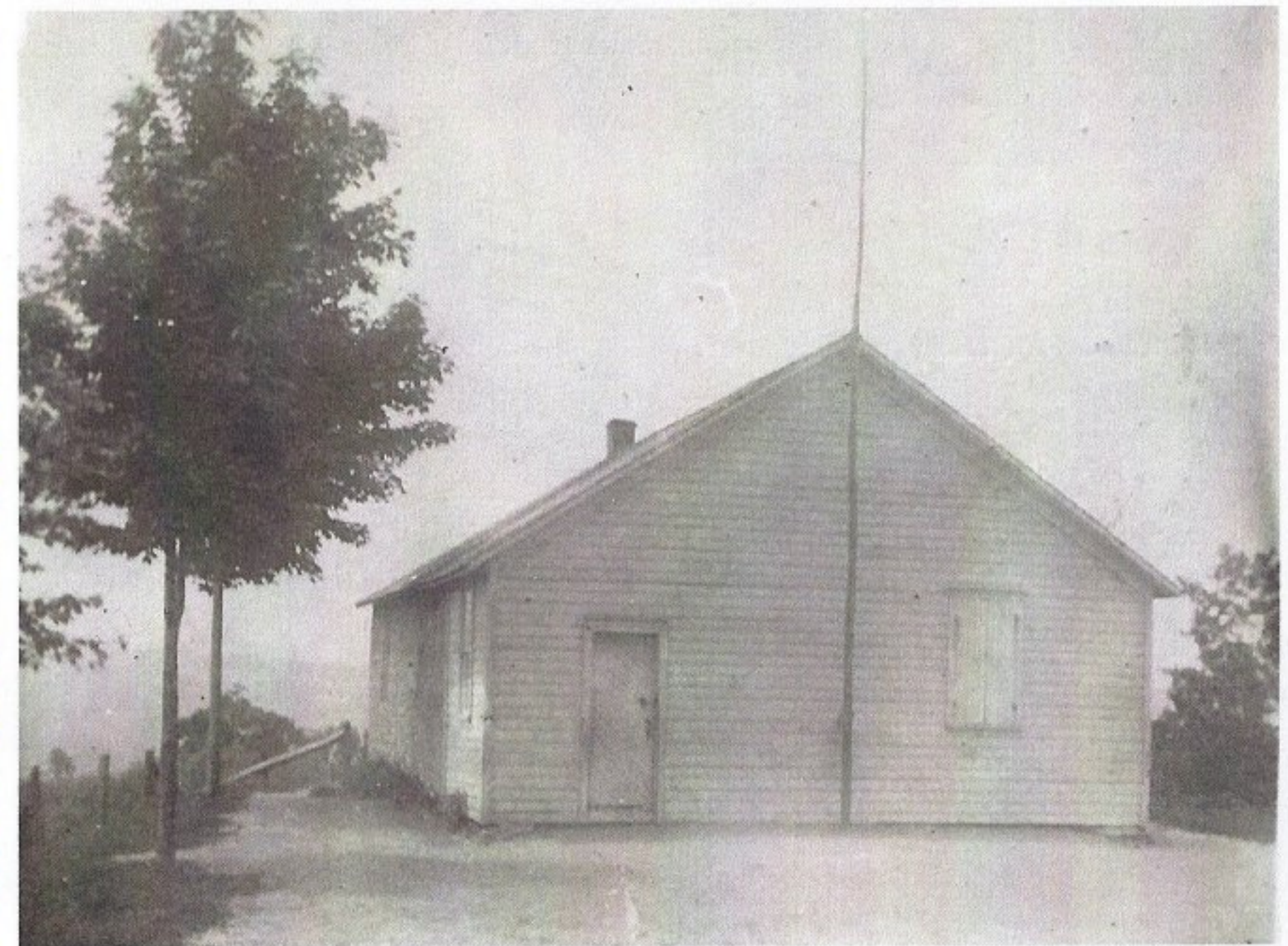
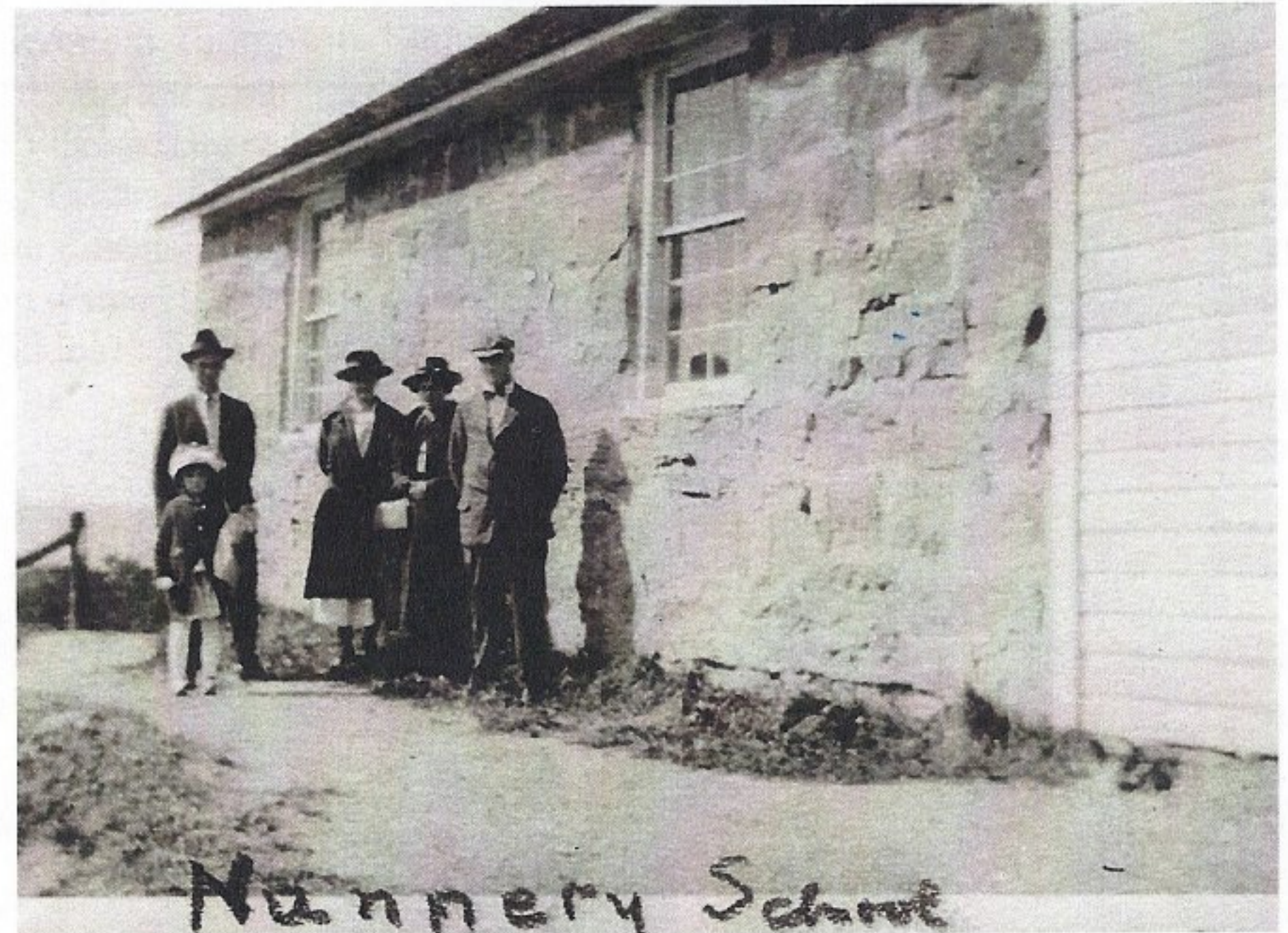
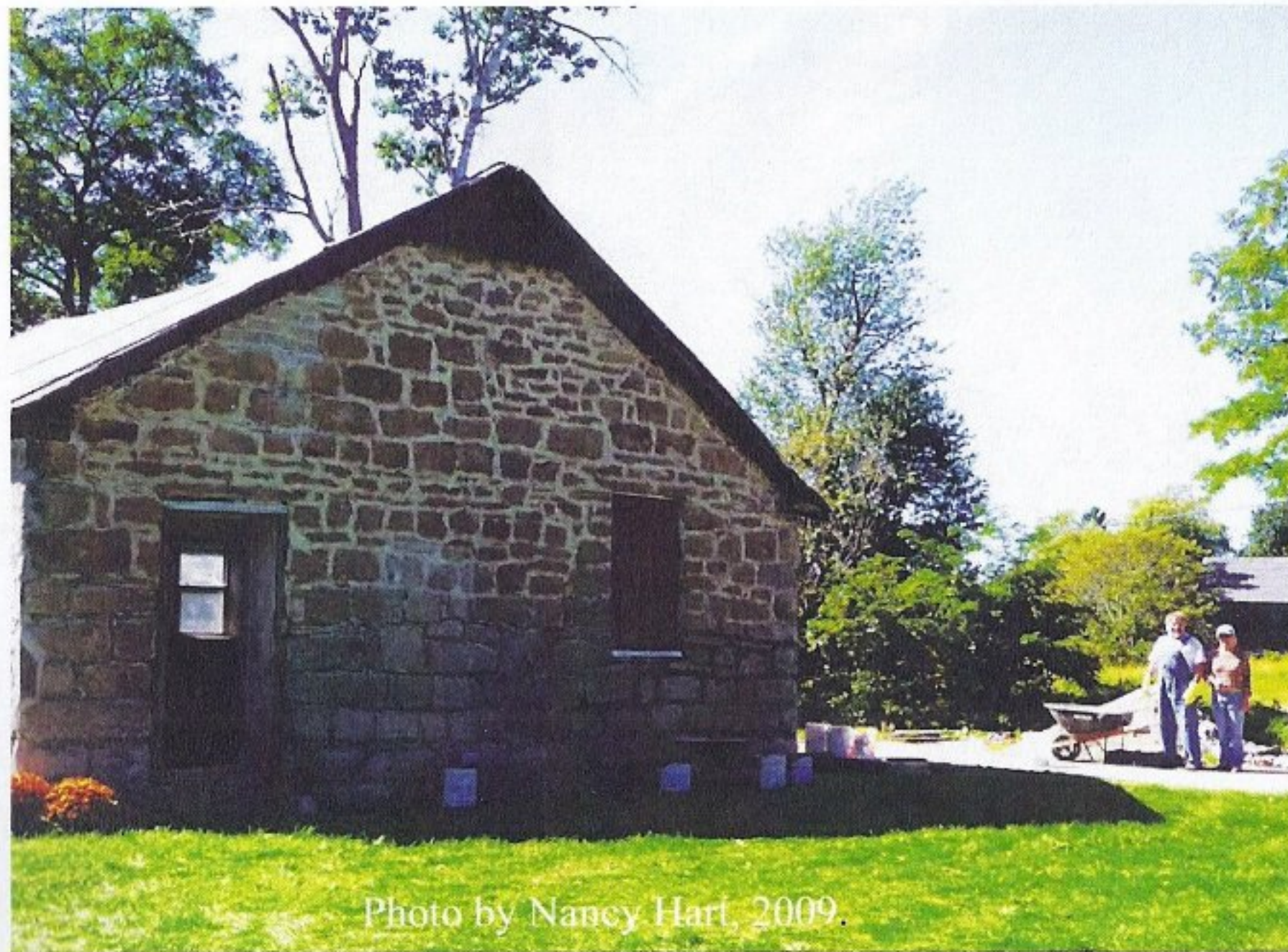


## District #1 – Nunnery

This is the only stone school in the town of Spafford. The stone may have come from the gorge near the school. Nunnery School is on Nunnery Road at the end of Dave Hull Road. The official closing of this school is not known; but most likely during the late 1940's or early 1950's. It is in the Skaneateles School District

### Nunnery School Today

Owner Heather Bruno-Sears is currently renovating the 'circa 1814 stone schoolhouse as an artisan retreat and studio.' Pictured below is Heather with her father, Reggie Sears. Source: Heatherbrunosears.com





## District #2 - Spafford School

The Spafford School was originally located on the hill east of the corners. At an annual meeting, March 3, 1853, it was voted to purchase land and build a new school on a site located south of the corners (now Route 41). It was decided that \$600 would be needed to purchase 80 rods of land, record the deed and build the school with an attached woodshed. The new school was to be completed by November 1, 1854. After officially closing August 27, 1956 it joined the Homer School District.  
Source: Trustee's Records, 1845



### Spafford School Picnic, 1955

Front row L-R: Barbara Cooter, Barbara Palm, Carl Palm, Jr., Mikey Cooter, Sandra Sweet, J. McKean, D. Beers, Danny Cooter.

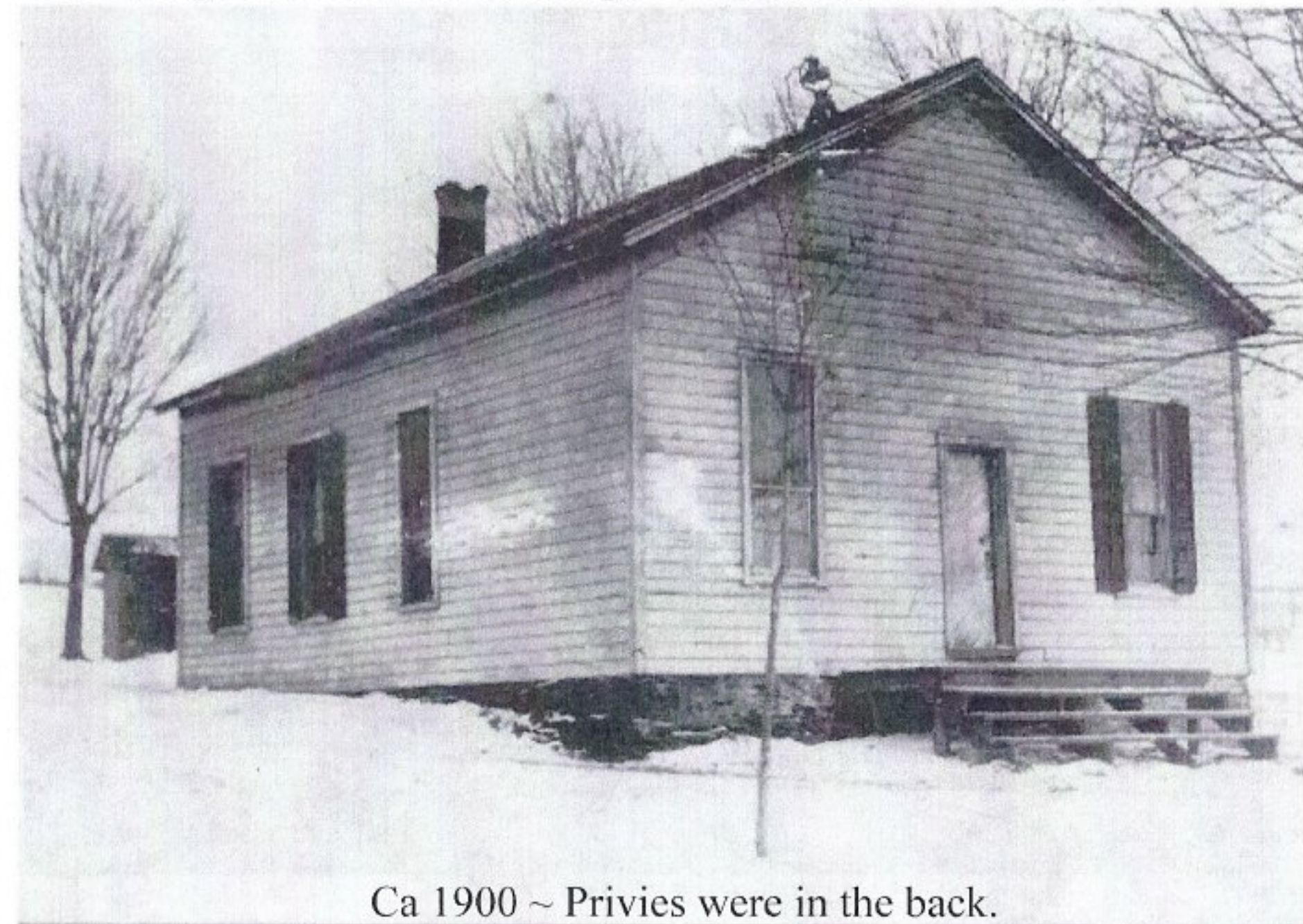
Second row L-R: Sandra Case, Becky Cooter, Eleanor Beers

Back row L-R: Rose Case (now Clark), Sally Cooter, Ruthie Cooter



### Spafford School Students

Ruby Morris, Thelma Prindle Jacobi, Elwyn Barber, Harlen Barber, Pete Craig, Francis Prindle, Margaret Prindle (not in order)



Ca 1900 ~ Privies were in the back.



## 1948 Spafford School

Front row: Billie Lou McKean, Raymond Thompson, Elaine Burrows,  
Mary Anderson, Louis Filkins, Isabell VanPatten

Second row: Billy Burns, Vernon Filkins, Bruce Osadchey,  
Frank VanPatten, Shirley Stevens, Thelma Craig, LaVerne Craig

Back row: Sidney Fisher, Charlotte Filkins, Helen VanPatten,  
Lance Osadchey, Grace VanPatten, Frances Barrows, John Palm

Photo courtesy of Vern/Phyliss Filkins

