

Spencer School History; Constructed 1877



SPENCER SCHOOL, C. 1897

Spencer Community Centre

Spencer Community Centre was originally the Spencer Public School built on Lot #30 , Concession #7 (later named Columbus Road), Brooklin . The school was originally a log school house built around 1850. The school was replaced with the current brick building in 1877. It was situated on the property owned by John Campbell and then by his son in law, John Warren. It was known as School Section NO.6 and later named Spencer Public School after John Spencer, as it was built on the corner adjacent to John Spencer's farm, Lot # 29. Concession #7. Many years ago because the entrance to the school being off of Columbus Road, and the traffic being so heavy while children were being dropped off, the entrance to the school was altered so that students entered the school yard from Country Lane, thus changing the address for the school to 7035 Country Lane.. The school closed in 1965 and reopened as the Spencer Community Center in 1967. The children of families who lived and worked on the neighbouring farms went to this school. The school, a 19th century one-room schoolhouse still features most of its original features. The original bell is still located in the tower. The school was heated with a wood furnace. The front door was closed in the 1950's and the two windows were installed on the front of the protrusion. There were two new doors installed on either side of the front protruding section. One for the girls and the other for the boys. These doors were installed where the two original windows existed. There were two outside toilets in the back of the schoolyard.

In 1965, Spencer School was technically closed and the Spencer School children were transferred by bus to Meadowcrest Public School.

Mrs. Ethel Vint was the last teacher at the end of the last school year. The parents of the school children attending at the time, held a strawberry tea at the home of Mrs. Harold Dennis. There, Mrs. Vint was presented with a hand painted eiderdown Quilt which bore a picture of the school and the names of 65 both past and present students. The painting was done by David Thompson of Brooklin , a student at a Whitby High School. The quilt was presented by Christine Bagg, a grade 7 student.

In 1967, Spencer School was converted into a community centre. The community centre plays an important role in the community as it is now a gathering place for local groups and families. It hosts many events including birthday parties, showers, wedding receptions, Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners.

In 2016, a request by members of the board, at the school, was made to the town to have the Spencer Community Centre designated under the Ontario Heritage Act to help preserve it. The boards request was backed by Whitby's Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee. Council voted to approve the designation of Spencer

Community Centre as a heritage property. Rhonda Mulcahy, a descendant of the Spencer family, sat on council when the designation was approved.

The designation of the Spencer Community Centre was celebrated in May of 2017 at the school with Mayor Don Mitchell and several Whitby Councillors present. Also several descendants of the Spencer family were there to see the unveiling of the Historical Plaque.

Spencer School

The site on which the Spencer Community Centre sits was originally the location of a schoolhouse built sometime around 1850. It was situated on property owned first by John Campbell and then by his son-in-law, John Warren. Like many schools of this era, it served the children of families who lived and worked on neighbouring farms.


By 1877, the original schoolhouse was replaced with a one-room, red brick structure known as School Section No. 6. It was one of five schools built in the northern region of the Township of Whitby around the same time. These schools served an important role in providing standardized, curriculum-based education in rural communities where children were often unable to travel to the school in the nearest town or village. The other schools were Ashburn Public School (1861), Sinclair Public School (1874), Dryden Public School (1880), and Myrtle Public School (1880). School Section No. 6 came to be known in the community as Spencer Public School because of its proximity to the Spencer

family farm, which was located on the lot just east of the school. The school is a well-preserved example of a 19th century one-room schoolhouse retaining most of its original external features. The school has elements of the Gothic Revival architectural style: a rectangular plan with gable front, semicircular windows, and the wooden bell tower with decorative bargeboard. The original bell is still located in the tower.

After the Second World War, Brooklin and surrounding communities grew. Rural schools were closed and centralized to accommodate increasing class sizes. The Spencer School closed in 1965 and the students were transferred by bus to Meadowcrest Public School in Brooklin. In 1967 Spencer Public School and the schools at Myrtle and Ashburn were converted into community centres. The Spencer Community Centre is now a meeting place for local groups and families and continues to play an important role in the community.

WHITBY
TOWNSHIP

The Silver Maple



Spencer School class photograph, 1907

The mature silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) tree to the east of the Spencer School building is a natural feature which is part of the property's cultural heritage value and is one of the features that is identified through the property's designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. This silver maple is estimated to have been planted soon after the construction of School Section No. 6 in 1877. This tree has witnessed the area's transition from subsistence agriculture carved from the wilderness to the modern, suburban community it is today.


Below, far left: Photograph showing the Spencer School around 1897. Students and members of the community are pictured in the school yard.

Below, middle right: Photographic postcard showing the west side of Spencer School, 1908.




Below, middle left: Spencer School class photograph from 1906.

Below, far right: Spencer School class photograph from 1937.






13 Spencer Community Centre

7035 Country Lane

The site on which the Spencer Community Centre stands was the original location of a log schoolhouse built around 1850. The school was replaced with the current building in 1877. Known as School Section No. 6, it served rural residents living north-west of the Village of Brooklin. A well-preserved example of a one-room schoolhouse, it has a rectangular plan, large windows, and a wooden bell tower. School Section No. 6 later became known as the Spencer Public School because of its proximity to the Spencer family farm. The school closed in 1965 and in 1967 the building reopened as the Spencer Community Centre.

DOORS OPEN WHITBY

Spencer Community Centre

7035 Country Lane, Brooklin

This red brick school house was built in 1877. The building is now over 130 years old. It replaced an earlier school house dating from the 1830s-1840s that was known as the Campbell School.

Spencer School, as the new school was called, was named after Henry Herbert Spencer (1831-1894). Henry Spencer was a farmer who lived near the school. Three generations



Spencer School Section No. 6, June 18, 1907



Spencer School Community Centre, 2005

of students attended Spencer School including the children and grandchildren of Henry Spencer. The school closed in 1965 and the students were transferred to Meadowcrest Public School, built in 1958 in Brooklin. Several other small schools in Whitby Township were closed at this time including the Dryden, Myrtle and Ashburn schools. All the students were transferred to Meadowcrest Public School.

In 1967, Spencer School was purchased by Whitby Township and became a community centre.



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John SPENCER 1786-1875



DETAILS

Residence of John Spencer

1870.....This log cabin was built by John Spencer (1786-1875) who settled on lot 29 of Concession 7 in 1833. David Burns (1850-1922), a poet in Brooklin, was born in this house on Aug.6, 1850.



Scrapbook of Spencer School



SPENCER SCHOOL, JUNE 18, 1907

1907 class picture taken at 5 pm June 18, 1907. The teacher is Miss Almyra Blanche Holliday of Brooklin. Note original small pane windows.



SPENCER SCHOOL CLASS, SEPTEMBER 5, 1930

1930; B: Henry Perry, Frank Parrinder, Stan Lockyer, Lewis Bird, Lillian Jones, Marjorie Parkin, Amy Ingledew, Margaret Lockyer, Ialenn DeHart, Wilheme Holliday (Teacher) M: Elsie Perry, Mary Jones, Helen Jackson, RuthDeHart, RitaParrish, MarkLockyer, GordonParrinder, RonnieMaynard; F: LesliePerry, Lloydprouse, Wilbur Parrinder.

Scrapbook of Spencer School



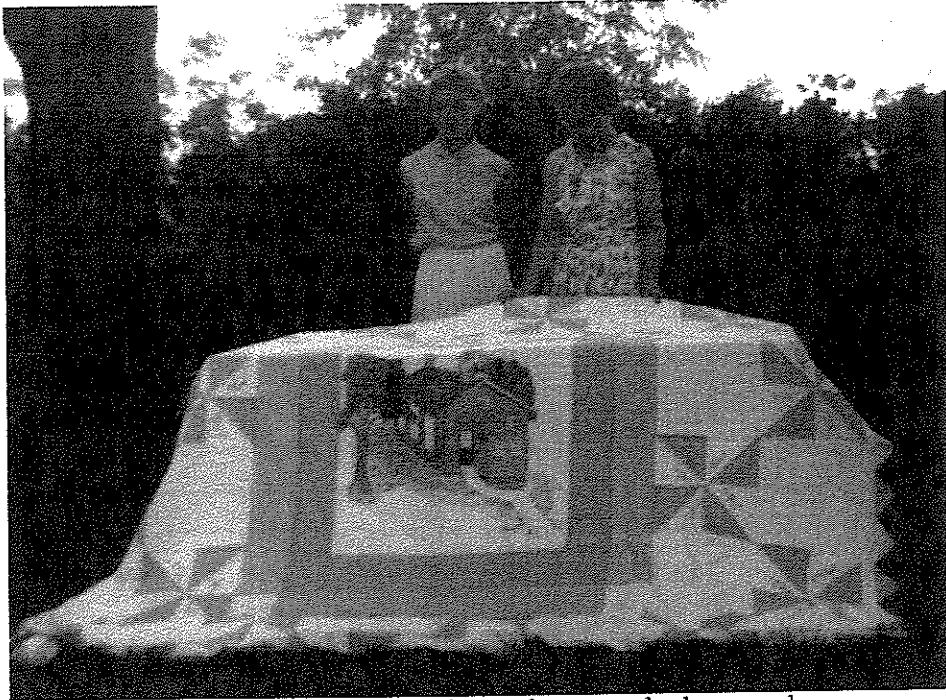
SPENCER SCHOOL CLASS, 1937

1937; Back: Ted Thachuk, Mary Jones, Richard Smitherman, Jim Smitherman, Milville Cox, Tom Blowing, Arthur Parrinder, Alfred Jackson, Douglas Jackson; M: Betty Lockyer, May Parrinder, Margaret Bolingbroke, Mable Spencer, Allister Mathews, Roman Borch. F: Anita Borch, George Spencer, Ed Spence.

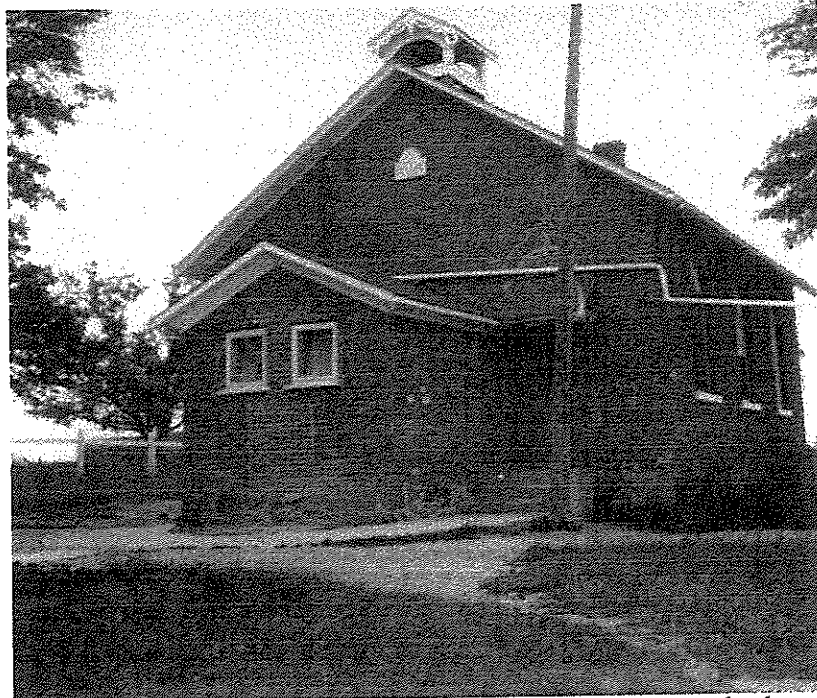


1940; Teacher: Mrs. Ellen Bird; Back: Alex Matthews, Tom Blowing, Douglas Jackson, Art Parrinder, Ted Thatchuk, Richard Smitherman, M: Ronnie Moran, Betty Lokyer, May Parrinder, Roman Borsch, Art Stevens, F: Caroline Stevens, Olga Borsch, Jayne Moran. Absent: Alfred Jackson; haying.

Scrapbook of Spencer School

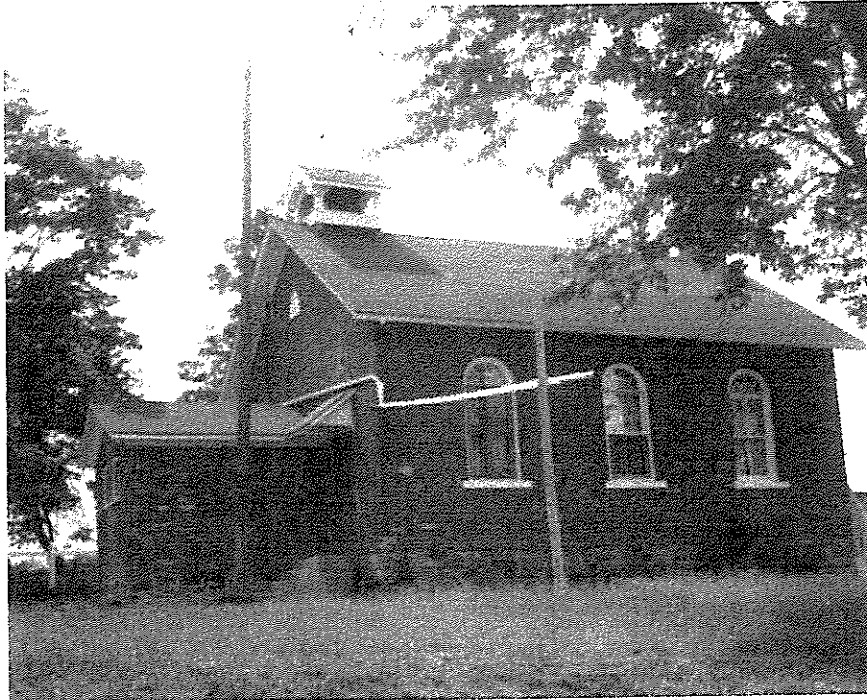


1965; Mrs. Vint, last teacher, and _____?, displaying quilt

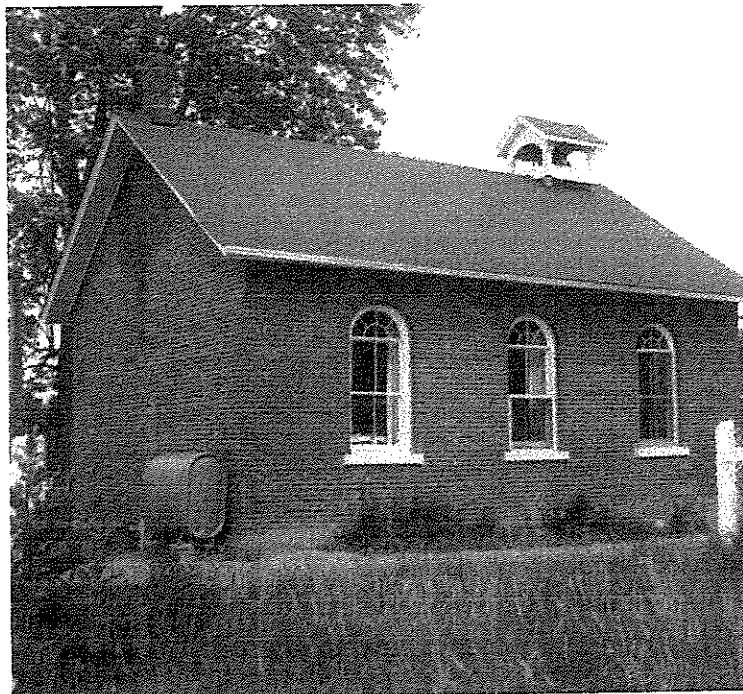


Spencer, about 1967; S/E Corner. Path still well worn due to school use.

Scrapbook of Spencer School



Spencer, about 1975; S/E Corner; eavestrough still in use.



Spencer; about 1975, N/W Corner, oil tank for oil heater in N/E corner of school room, no well visible.

Designation of the Spencer Community Centre

May 6, 2017



Whitby's Spencer School building to go down in history

Former school turned into community centre will be designated under Heritage Act after serving residents for more than a century.



Sharon Worsley & Mary Verrydt, members of the board at the Spencer Community

