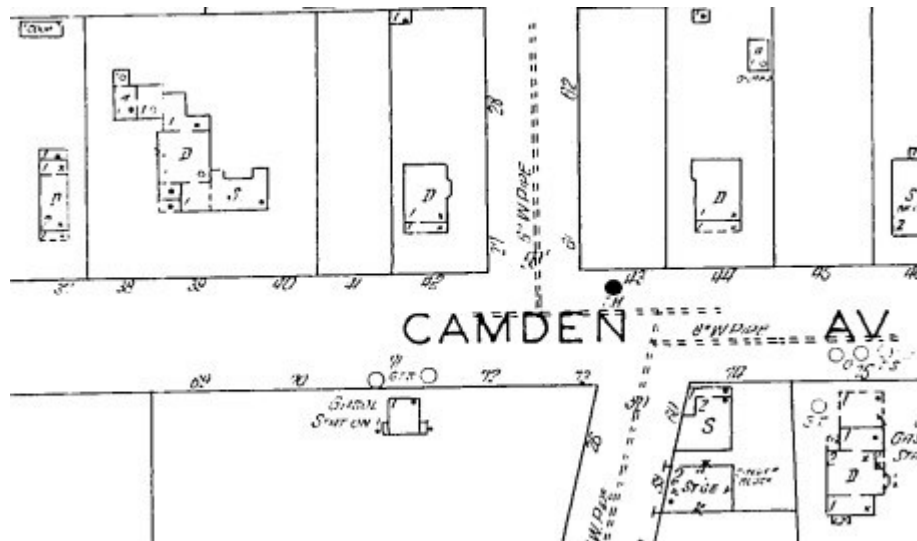


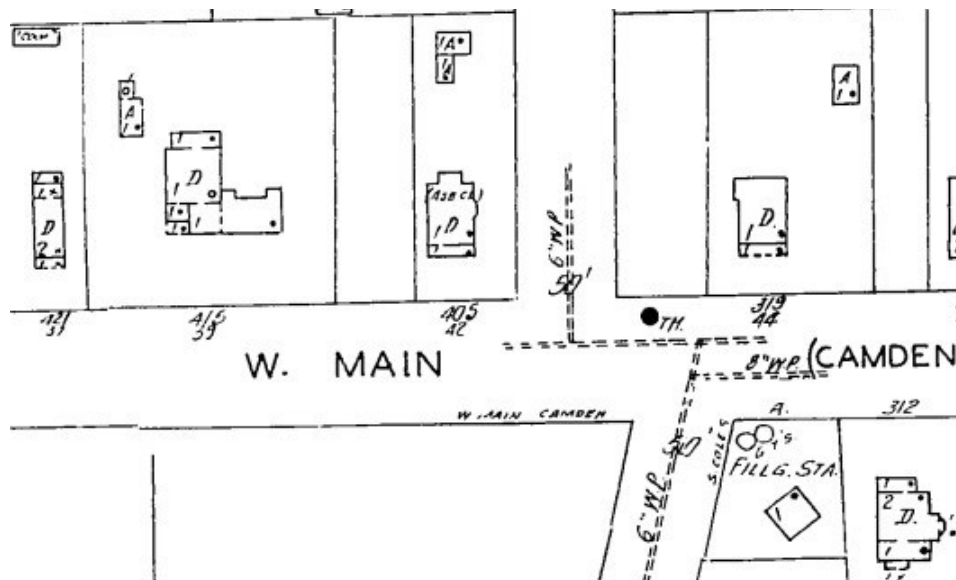
Maple Shade Historical Society Beginning and the Little Red Schoolhouse

According to Arthur Cutler, in the below mentioned “**Little Red Schoolhouse May Be Used For Classes**” newspaper article, about 1938 the Little Red Schoolhouse building was restored as nearly as possible to its original state by the Township of Maple Shade.

The date about 1938 is incorrect for the removal of additions added when the school was used as a residence, as we see on one of these Sanborn Insurance Co. maps-



1929 Sanborn map detail



1944 Sanborn map detail

William MacFarland (mentioned in a below newspaper article) was involved in the mid-1940s Twp. Committee which gives a window of 1944-45 to look through newspaper microfilm. I haven't found an article yet but I believe I read MacFarland was on the Twp. Committee from 1938 to 1945. He lost the November 1944 re-election. Given this and the 1944 Sanborn map the school reconstruction was most likely done under William MacFarland in 1944.

Little Red Schoolhouse May Be Used For Classes

This was the headline of an article in the Maple Shade Progress, March 1, 1956 in which school superintendent Lampert H. Reynolds asked the Township Committee permission to use the building.

Maple Shade's unofficial historian Arthur Cutler was then consulted to get some data on the building.

Whether the schoolhouse was again used for extra class space is unknown but I think it brought the school into the spotlight again at this time.

The following is from the Maple Shade Progress newspaper, March 15, 1956-

Old School Bell Was Fire Bell

Little Red School-House Has Old Bell In Tower

The history of the bell which hangs in the tower of the Little Red School House on W. Main St. came to light last week, it was the property of Independent Fire Company No. 1.

According to Moore, the bell originally was in the old fire house at South Poplar Ave. and was the first means of summoning firemen in emergencies.

When the company moved to the Municipal Building in the 20's the bell was stored in the old highway garage.

During the reconstruction of the school under William MacFarland, then Chairman of the Maple Shade Township Committee, he asked the firemen to give permission for the bell to be placed in the belfry where it would be kept until such time as the Fire Company should want it back.

Believing that the school of the past and the bell of the past belonged together, the firemen consented and Moore, along with other workmen from the road department moved the bell and installed it in the reconstructed belfry.

(More of the article left out)

From the Maple Shade Progress newspaper, September 20, 1956 article entitled "**Police Dept. Moves Into New Quarters**" explaining Police moving to where Fire Dept. was and Tax Office moving to where the Police were, etc...

We learn that Donald F. MacBride, is the Township Committeeman in charge of public buildings, street lighting and sanitation. Back then each Township Committee person was in charge of a department or several departments such as the Road Department.

The following article is from the Maple Shade Progress newspaper, November 15, 1956-

Planning Organization of Historical Society

Donald F. MacBride, a member of the Maple Shade Township Committee, is sponsoring the organizing of a Maple Shade Historical Society and is seeking the assistance of interested townspeople.

An organizational meeting will be held on Wed., Nov. 28, at 8 P.M. in the Municipal Building, and citizens are invited to attend. They may contact MacBride before that date at his home, 364 S. Maple Ave.

From the book "**Maple Shade A Story of 300 Years**" by the Cutler family, page 60-

The Maple Shade Historical Society was organized in December 1956. Donald F. McBride, chairman of the property committee of the Township of Maple Shade, called a special meeting of all townspeople who might be interested in preserving and restoring the Little Red School House at 415 W. Main Street and any other places of historic interest in existence in the township. The society was organized with twenty charter members and Arthur N. Cutler was chosen as president.

First attention was given to the need for restoring the Little Red Brick School which had fallen into serious disrepair during the years since 1909 when it was no longer a school and had been used in the passing years for various purposes. To raise money for repairs three Old Home Nights were organized. The first one was held in February 1957 attracting more than seven hundred people. Many Maple Shade old timers had come some distance to be present. The second occasion was May 1958 and the third, May 1959. All the meetings were held in the Steinhauer School auditorium.

The program was a presentation of many slide pictures of old Maple Shade collected by Arthur N. Cutler. The show was very popular and still exists with the title "Maple Shade Past and Present" having been expanded and updated by Charles C. Cutler.

The money raised by the three programs provided funds for work on the school.

The following photo caption is from the Maple Shade Progress newspaper, February 13, 1958-

Members of the Maple Shade Historical Society are shown erecting sign on the Little Red School House, Main St. west of Coles Ave. identifying the landmark as the home of the society which was founded 14 months ago. The sign, which is of colonial design and reads "Home of Maple Shade Historical Society" with the date of meetings as the fourth Wednesday of the month, was made by Frank Romano, treasurer, and lettered by Anthony DiBabbo, recording secretary. From left to right are Joseph Pasqueriello, a society member and vice chairman of the Maple Shade Board of Education; Arthur N. Cutler, historical society president; on the ladder, Donald F. MacBride, a member of the Maple Shade Township Committee and founder of the society; DiBabbo, Romano, Mrs. Irene Luft, corresponding secretary, and Mrs. MacBride, a member. John S. Bagg, principal of the Maple Shade Junior High School and vice president, was not present. A "new and different" Old Home Night is being planned for some time in March and as soon as weather permits, the society plans to erect a fence around the Little Red School House. The structure is one of the prime concerns of the society which was founded for the purpose of preserving and restoring one of Maple Shade's first public buildings. Membership in the society is open for 1958, with an entire family eligible for membership for \$5.

From the book "**Maple Shade A Story of 300 Years**" by the Cutler family, page 60 and 61-

The entire building was rewired by the firm of Dickman and Hansen at cost, their contribution to the restoration. The tin roof and belfry were given two coats of red paint, the foundation was repaired, walls and ceiling replastered, and members of the Lions Club contributed their service to paint the exterior woodwork and the interior walls and woodwork.

The first open house for the restored building was held July 4, 1963. The school room was furnished with a pot belly stove with coal scuttle and shovel, some old school desks from the Elizabeth Haig School on N. Poplar Avenue plus many other objects of interest that would have been in use in a school, workshop, or on a farm during the period 1812- 1909 when the school was open.

In 1970 Charles C. Cutler, who was born in Maple Shade, became president of the society. During his term of office, heat and modern lighting together with a new roof were installed. The ceiling was replastered and insulated and the floor scraped and refinished.

Boy and Girl Scout Troops repainted the interior walls and woodwork. A Cub Scout Troop planted a dogwood tree. A Senior Girl Scout Troop contributed money to landscape one of the three original fire hoops installed on the school lawn. The Town Council contributed a bronze identification plaque.

Today, the Historical Society maintains the building and is constantly adding to the collection of memorabilia of Maple Shade's past.

Compilation Study by Dennis Weaver

Maple Shade Historical Society

Nov. 26, 2023