

Little Red Schoolhouse History

Introduction

The red brick, Little Red Schoolhouse (LRS) was built in 1858 in the center of Poland Township to continue early education which began in that area in ca.1800. The education began in early settler homes, to a log schoolhouse built about 1805, and then to frame building.

Because of the growth of the village of Poland Center, in the center of the township, the Poland Rural Board of Education purchased 1.5 acres on the northeast corner of Center Rd (aka Rt 224) and Poland Center Rd (aka Struthers Rd). The purchase price was \$80 and bought from Wright and Elmira Adair. The new brick school was called "Center School" (aka Little Red Schoolhouse) and continued until 1915 when the public and district school system was created. The 2008 Mahoning Co. Auditor map shows an aerial view of the 1.5 acre property. The intersection is the approximate original center of Poland Township, which measured 5 miles on each side, before any land annexes and transfers. Note that Parcel 35-85-4 was called the "Town Hall" because after 1915 the schoolhouse was use by the township as a voting center, meeting place, and township storage, as well as other community organizations and events. In 2020, The Little Red Schoolhouse is still owned by the Poland Board of Education, and is believed to be the only one-room school in ohio still owned by a board of education.

1904 Poland Center School (aka LRS)

The oldest photo of the Little Red Schoolhouse that the Historical Society has is a class photo from 1903 or 1904 with Bruce Cook as the teacher. See the 2nd photo listing the names on the back of the photo. This photo was donated by Linda Ferenec from the family of Ruth Spitler. Can anyone add any names or provide another old photo of the Poland Center School?

1979 Poland Center School (aka LRS)

This is a 1979 photo of the Poland Center School when the Poland Historical Society was formed to save the red brick schoolhouse from destruction. As can be seen, significant damage to the roof with the large hole destroying the floor and load bearing structures, damage to the outside and trees and poison ivy growing up the building.

Fortunately, a group of concerned community citizens approached the Poland Board of Education and requested them not to sell the school. These citizens saw the need to preserve the history of education and landmarks for future generations.

2019 Little Red Schoolhouse (LRS)

In 1979, the Poland Township Historical Society, now known as Poland Historical Society (PHS), was formed with the goal of saving and restoring the Little Red Schoolhouse. After many meetings, the historical society was formed consisting of Betty Jones, Nick Jeswald, John Scotford Sr., Eleanor Whalen, Katherine Simmons, Pete Sturbi (chairman of Poland Twp Trustees) and Attorney, Donald Seeley. This group of individuals created the PHS By-Laws, and on March 26, 1980, the historical society was incorporated as a 501(c)(3),non-profit corporation with the State of Ohio. This 2019 photo shows what the LRS looked like at the 2019 40th anniversary of the Poland Historical Society. Because of this initial group of individuals with their tireless energy and generosity and the similar dedication of the following PHS members over the last 40 years, the Poland Historical Society is alive and well to serve future generations with Poland's historic past.