

**Stanhope Schoolhouse, a project of the Pinegrove Historical Society
Pine Grove, PA**

PGHS-StanhopeSchool.org

PGHS-StanhopeSchool@outlook.com

Submitted by Linda Mills – Chair, Stanhope Schoolhouse



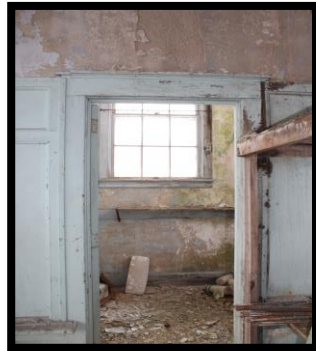
Early History

The brick one-room Stanhope Schoolhouse opened in 1876 for grades 1-8. The original brick schoolhouse burned down on October 22, 1923. Students who went outside to get coal for the stove heater discovered the building's roof was on fire. Reporting this to their female teacher the only help to extinguish the fire came from families living nearby since there were no phones in the area at that time. The gutted structure was unusable. For the remainder of the 1923-1924 school year, students were transferred to the Marstown School, 2 miles away. In March 1924, the contract for a frame school went to Charles Werner & Co. The cost to erect the 26 by 36 feet frame schoolhouse was \$3,440. It was constructed according to specifications submitted by the State Department of Public Instruction. Its design and materials were the first of their kind in this section of the country. Electric was installed at the schoolhouse in 1947. In preparation for the consolidation of schools by the Pine Grove School District, the 1951-1952 school year sent Stanhope students in grades 1-4 to the Marstown school, grades 5-6 were transferred to Brookside school (2 miles away), and grades 7 and 8 remained at Stanhope along with grades 7 and 8 students from Marstown and Brookside. The schoolhouse closed in 1952.



Post-School Use

November 13, 1954 a non-profit organization purchased the property from the Pine Grove School District at an auction for \$1,000. By 2013 the non-profit organization had determined the building had outlived its useful life and would be demolished. Linda Mills was made aware of this demolition plan in December 2013 and contacted the Pinegrove Historical Society in an attempt to save the schoolhouse. The mission of the society is the discovery, collection, display, preservation, and publication of archives and artifacts of the Pine Grove area, and to provide educational opportunities to the community. Finally on August 6, 2014 the Society took ownership of the schoolhouse for \$1 plus closing lcosts totaling \$2,618 and saved this piece of history.



Restoration

From a lack of upkeep, there was a large hole (big enough for several large adults to fit through!), and lath and plaster was falling off the walls and ceiling. The abandoned building was a community eyesore marked by a shredded blue tarp flapping on the roof and pieces drifting around the property. Restoration efforts started on October 23, 2014 with an already organized community volunteer group providing 420 hours to repair the roof and clean out debris in the interior at a cost of \$3,381 after every rafter on the west side of the building needed to be replaced! Without their efforts the roof would have most likely caved in with the snow that winter.

Over the next seven years, some of the restoration work completed by volunteers included:

- some exterior wood replaced
- most of the exterior painted
- two Eagle Scout projects removed interior walls and ceiling, put in new electric service, insulate the walls, put up new walls and ceiling;
- a group of three dedicated retirees replaced a rotten floor section under the pot belly stove: spackled, sanded, and painted the walls and ceiling; replaced trim and doors; restored windows; and worked on the foundation over multiple years
- a Girl Scout troop painted trim providing 65 of service
- two electric company volunteers connected the new electric service
- scrubbed years of dirt and mud off the floor and sealed it for protection
- painted the blackboards with chalkboard paint in the absence of slate boards
- several trees were removed in preparation for a parking area
- volunteers from a local company installed a two-sided glass enclosure preserving part of the original lath and plaster wall
- a local woodworker made and installed a new chalkboard ledge after the original one had been cut to hold shelving by the previous owner
- the original schoolhouse bell was located and moved to the schoolhouse (still awaiting installation in the bell tower)
- print media, website, and Facebook presence began

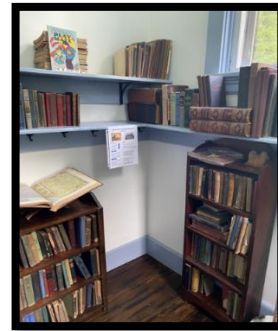
“Restoration in Progress” events were held in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021 to show the community the progress on transforming this once community eyesore into an historic property. No event was held in 2020 due to COVID.



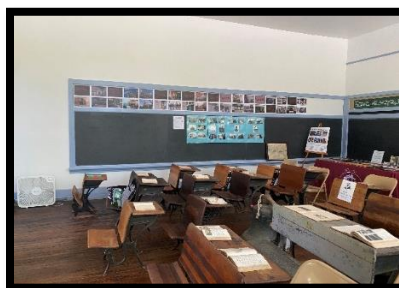


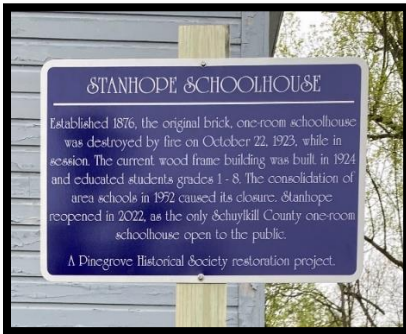
Grand Re-Opening

The Grand Re-Opening was held August 13, 1922 – eight years and one week (2,929 days) after the society took ownership! Progress was slowed with COVID and at times available volunteers since the project must be self-supporting and needed to rely on private donations, fundraising, and grants to pay for supplies. As much as possible, volunteer labor has worked on restoration, maintenance, and publicity efforts. Over 145 volunteers provided more than 3,500 labor hours .



Since then, slate blackboards from another school have been installed, the outhouse foundation has been uncovered, an Eagle Scout project make a milled surface parking lot and removed brush, an historical-type sign has been installed, the exterior has been painted, and design work has been donated multiple years by local university students.

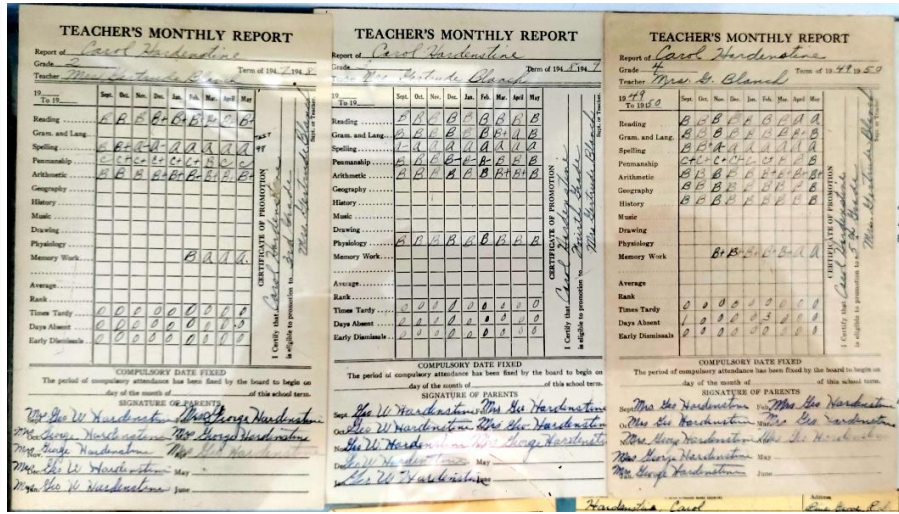
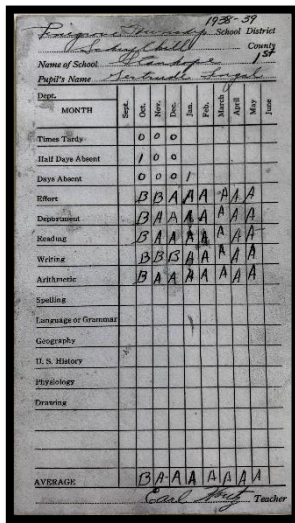
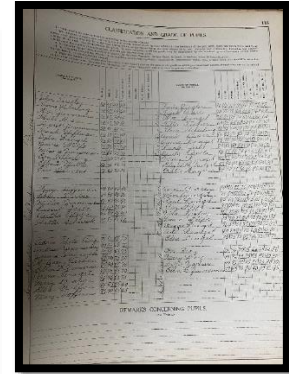
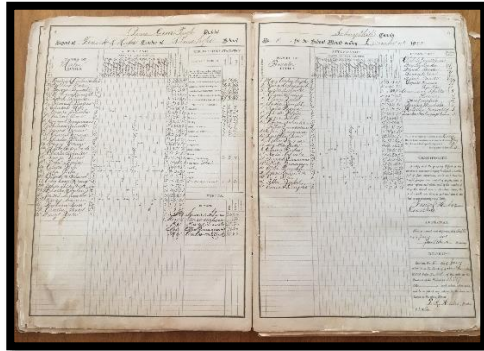
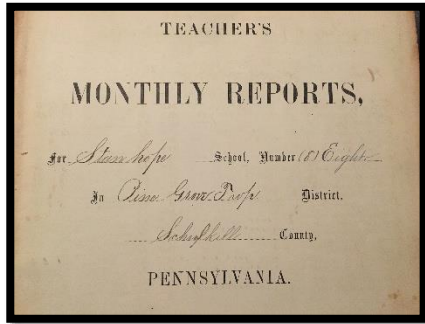




We are very fortunate to have seven Stanhope School alumni providing valuable first-hand information. In 2019 a story about some of them was written by a local AP reporter and was published in over 108 newspapers across the country. Four alumni presented the inaugural educational program “Stories from the Stanhope Schoolhouse” on September, 17, 2022.

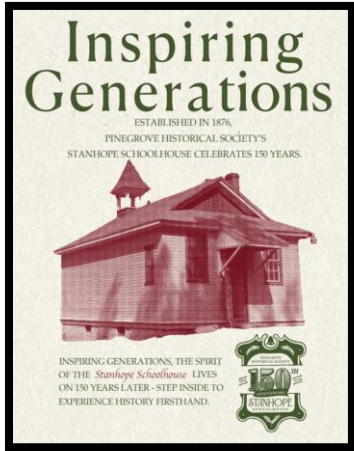


Stanhope artifacts acquired from the community includes the 1883-1893 and 1911-1921 Teacher's Monthly Report books; numerous class pictures, including a couple from the brick schoolhouse; and two sets of report cards.



150th Anniversary

The 150th anniversary of the schoolhouse is in 2026. To celebrate this event, the book *Inspiring Generations* was published to preserve stories, photos, and memories that capture what education and community life was like in the area generations ago. Stanhope Schoolhouse librarian/genealogist, Terry Winters; and chair, Linda Mills compiled and edited the book.



Today Stanhope is the only one-room schoolhouse open to the public in Schuylkill County and provides three free public educational programs and an opportunity to view the museum six times a year or by appointment. As with any project, there is still further restoration and maintenance needed for the property, additional classroom items desired, and more visitors to explore this piece of history.

