

Marcy A. Morgan
364 Creek Road
Sugar Grove, Pa. 16350

June 04, 2019

Dear Ms. Morgan,

The Pine Grove Township Historical Committee is again requesting to transfer the Russell school bell back to the Russell area. The bell was removed from in front of the Route 62 Elementary School building during the 2003 – 2004 renovation and at that time was placed on a utility cart and displayed in the RES vestibule. The bell followed the Russell students to the new Eisenhower Elementary School and is now being warehoused in the former Sugar Grove Elementary School.

Pine Grove Historical Committee has the finances available to erect a final resting place for this school bell so its place in the history of Pine Grove Township education can be preserved.

A memorial would be erected at the former site of the brick Russell High School and Grade School on Pine Street in the village. This area has become a small park with a gazebo surrounded by shrubbery and bricks inscribed with present and former residents. Our Historical Committee would pay any expenses incurred with the transfer of the bell back to Russell.

We have seen the Lander School bell sitting outside at the former Lander Elementary School and the Sugar Grove bell in front of the now WCSD Sugar Grove Operations Center. Please consider returning the Russell School bell to Russell where it will have a special place in local history.

I have enclosed a history of the bell which will show why we are very compassionate on this subject.

As representatives of Region III. We believe you will have significant understanding concerning our request.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Farnsworth, Pine Grove Historical Committee
497 Gouldtown Road
Russell, Pa. 16345 814-757-9227

Cc: Mary R. Passinger
Michael J. Zamborik
Enclosure

children were taken to the village in horse drawn carriages. This, too, is now a unique memorial.

SLIDES (3)

Actually, there is only one real memorial that I know of to the seven log schoolhouses, 16 frame buildings, and 1 brick building that have served our youth as educational centers for 185 years. That memorial has 116 years of history to its credit.

In 1883 a group of young girls such as Inez Gregory and Mildred Fox formed The Young Ladies' Sewing Circle Society. To be a member one had to be unmarried, of good moral character, and over age 13. Dues were 25 cents a year. They made and sold stocking bags, quilts, aprons, pillow shams, pincushions and rugs.

After one lengthy discussion in 1884, it was voted to take the money they had made and give it to the new school for the board to purchase a school bell. It cost nearly \$50.00 and was hung in the belfry of the frame Russell Union School.

When the brick building replaced the frame building in 1918 the bell was taken to the top of old Russell High School. The rope that was pulled to toll the bell hung from the roof down into the back of the science room on the third floor. Tall students brushed the rope going between the last row of seats and the back wall. It was a great source of temptation for

some boys to pull the rope and toll the bell when noone was looking. This happened quite frequently – much to the displeasure of the principal.

SLIDE

More than 60 years have passed since I have really heard that bell; but in my mind I still know exactly how it sounded. Now the bell does not toll any more. It is placed on a brick framework in front of the present elementary school just south of Russell on new Rt. 62. On it is engraved

Presented By Young Ladies Sewing Circle Society

To

Russellburg Schools in 1884

I am grateful for that one memorial and the **HOST** of memories I have of my education in Pine Grove Township.

Thank you for listening.

References:

Blair, H. L., Warren County Review of Its Historical – Political – Social Development, 1739 – 1950, pages 13-21.

Blair, H. L., History of Education in Pennsylvania, 1854-1954, pages 7-13, 19, 20.

Ethel Young
Russell High School Reunion
August 27, 2000