The West District Schoolhouse sits close to the road on the north side of Copper Mine Road. Its property lines are bounded by trees on the west and other buildings of similar age to the east and south.
This wood-frame district schoolhouse is typical of the period, a simple gable-to-street building exhibiting little or no detail. The gable facade contains a central door, possibly not in its original location, flanked by six-over-six windows. Above the door at the attic level are a pair of smaller windows.

The First Ecclesiastical Society of Farmington voted in 1773 to divide the town into twelve school districts, instructing the inhabitants "to erect school houses in their respective districts where and when they please". The 1790 stone schoolhouse was the original school, and this was the West District's second school house. In the fall of 1871 Jerry and Flora Wilcox deeded a small plot from their farm on the "Old Litchfield Turnpike" to the West School District (FLR 61:609). This school house was erected between then and the summer of 1872 when the old stone school house was sold to George North (FLR 61:117). Among the men of the district who supplied their labor were William Webster, said to have laid the foundation, and Elijah Roberts, acting as builder. The school house enrolled as many as 35 students in eight grades through the years 1907-09 when Bessie Wales Lewis taught there. Other local instructors included Mrs. Bradford Pond, Theresa Dronfield, and Mrs. Catherine Pillsbury. In 1922 the West and Union School districts consolidated, the one room schoolhouse was closed, and students were transported to Unionville. The land and district school were sold in 1947 to John W. and Gertrude L. Day, who made it their home (FLR 100:277).

This building is historically significant as the second West District Schoolhouse.


Lewis, Bessie Wales, The Lure of Litchfield Hills, 63, Spring-Summer 1971, pp. 8-11.

Photographer: K.J. Istok
Date: 11/85
View: N
Negative on File: 8:31

Compiled by: Gilbert Ramos
Address: 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT
Organizations: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

21 Threats to Building or Site
X None known
☐ Highways
☐ Vandalism
☐ Developers
☐ Other

☐ Renewal
☐ Private
☐ Deterioration
☐ Zoning
☐ Explanation
Coppermine Road

The second West District School

This frame schoolhouse, pictured on page 35 of the Farmington Book, was built in 1872. Its site on Coppermine Road is about 50 yards west of the junction with Red Oak Hill Road, and about one hundred yards west of the old stone school building, St. Simon's Chapel, pictured on the same page.

Jerry Wilcox was the donor of the site for the second school and the men of the district built it. William Webster is said to have put in the foundation, and Elijah Roberts to have been the builder. Theresa Dronfield and Mrs. Catherine Pillsbury were two of the early teachers, Mrs. Pillsbury having been the former Catherine Hinman. Miss E. H. Watson, the teacher pictured in the photo on page 35, was no relation of the Mr. Watson who was railroad station agent. Miss Gallinat was pictured later with the class of 1912-13.

It is said that while William Porter was head of the school committee in the 1870's, one Hattie Conant of Vermont applied for the position of teacher. Mr. Porter asked if she could handle the boys, and she responded: "They don't raise any boys in Connecticut that I can't handle!". She got the job.

A later teacher was Miss Lambert. She married Dr. Michael Morrissey who practiced in Unionville and Farmington.

Miss Bessie Wales of St. Albans, Vermont, taught two years, from 1907 to 1909, later marrying George Lewis of West District, whose wife died in 1908. In an article written by Mrs. Bessie Wales Lewis in 1955, and published in "Lure of the Litchfield Hills", she says of the one-room school: "It was a busy place, but the older children helped the younger, and even heard their lessons at times when the teacher was giving extra time to another group. One-room schools had their disadvantages, but the younger children did learn much from hearing the older ones recite, and these older ones learned responsibility in caring for the little ones." At this time the school had about 35 pupils, in eight grades.

West District School was consolidated with Union District in 1922, Union and Center Districts were consolidated later, and in January 1947 this frame schoolhouse was sold to John W. and Gertrude L. Day. Mrs. Day died around 1959, and some six years later Mr. Day remarried. Mr. Day died in the latter part of 1969, as the result of a car accident. He left three sons.

September 25, 1970