



A typical 1940's classroom

Barstow History

Frederic Duclos Memorial School is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary this year. Built in 1933 to serve the students of Chittenden, it expanded in 1949 to educate schoolchildren from Mendon and East Pittsford. The history of this unique school and its development is a fascinating story.

Mr. and Mrs. William Slocum Barstow of Long Neck, New York were frequent visitors to their son Frederic's home in Chittenden during the 1920's. Frederic had served in World War I and returned from the war in poor health. He purchased property in Chittenden to escape to the country. For ten years he ran a fox farm, which is today the site of the Fox Creek Inn, but suffered an untimely death in 1930 while traveling in the South Seas.

The Barstows were devastated by their loss and wanted to create a memorial to their son. They had become quite fond of Chittenden and had purchased their own property, a farm now known as the Mountain Top Inn, which they used as a summer home until 1946. Mr. Barstow had made his fortune in the early days of electricity, first working for Thomas Edison and then with his own engineering consulting business. They decided upon a school dedicated to their son to provide a practical education with strong vocational, technical, and home economics training for the children of Chittenden. The school cost \$430,000 to build, an extraordinary sum for the time. To alleviate the financial concerns of the 341 person town, the family set up an endowment fund to cover many of the school's expenses. The school opened its doors in 1933 to fifty students. In 1939 an addition provided a gymnasium, more classrooms and a central outdoor courtyard, again financed by the Barstow family.



One of the vocational training rooms

Throughout the 1930's and 40's the school operated at less than half capacity with high annual expenses. By 1948, the school was experiencing deficit spending each year even with the Barstow family assistance. In addition, the town of Chittenden was still reeling from a catastrophic flood due to the Chittenden dam's failure in 1947 and had no ability to meet school budget shortfalls. The school's future was uncertain.

Fortunately, in 1948 Raymond D. Dopp was hired as the new superintendent of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory District. He faced several problems related to the failing school. Although the capacity was 200, fewer than 90 students were attending the school. Mrs. Barstow, now widowed, was tiring of meeting



The Barstow library and display of artifacts donated by Frederic Barstow