

Hamilton Creek School



Above: The newly-constructed Hamilton Creek School as it looked in 1953. In 1971 it was destroyed by fire.

The History of Hamilton Creek School

Hamilton Creek School is in its 49th year of serving the Lebanon community. Its beginnings, however, go back to the mid-1880's when several rural schools served the Hamilton Creek and McDowell Creek area. In the mid to late 1880's, Mt. Hope, Happy Home, Berlin, East Berlin, and Reed Schools served families in what is now the Hamilton Creek School area.

Each of these schools has its own unique history. Reed School, for example, began in 1884 as a donation of one acre of land by A.P. and Johanna Newquist. Reed School was named after John Reed, who pioneered this area. The one room school that is located next to Hamilton Creek School was constructed at a cost of \$1700.00. Money for the school bell was raised by students giving school plays to the community. The school bell, which is still ringable, was shipped around The Horn to the school site in 1914.

After World War I, the populations of the five country schools steadily gained. In 1951, the five schools (Mt. Hope, Happy Home, Berlin, East Berlin, and Reed School) consolidated to form the Hamilton Creek School District on property obtained from Thad and Delilah Hall. A new school was constructed on the site with much of the structure still in place today.

During the summer of 1961, the unoccupied East Berlin School building was moved to the back of the north side of Reed School. Both buildings were used for kindergarten, first and second grades at various times until 1982 when a fire destroyed the East Berlin portion of the school. Until 1995, the Reed building was used as a band room.

Fires did considerable damage on two different occasions. On June 22, 1971, fire destroyed the entire school which was built in 1952. A 1964 addition was also partially destroyed. During the reconstruction, several classes were held in the gym while kindergarten and first grade were held in the East Berlin and Reed School buildings. In 1982, a fire destroyed the East Berlin school, which was attached to Reed School. The Reed School was repaired and used as a kindergarten or band room until closure.

Major construction took place in 1987 to add a new gym, library and classrooms. More construction occurred in 2001-02 to add classrooms, a large cafeteria and kitchen, an expanded library, new offices and support space, and improved parking and bus access. The front of the new building is shown below.



Below: Fresh from a \$4.3 million remodeling in 2002-03, Hamilton Creek as it looks from the east, today. New classrooms and a new kitchen were added in this latest round of updating, and the rest of the school was remodeled.



***Hamilton Creek School
Fire Strikes Again
From When the Bells Rang***

A one-room frame building built around 1911 was first known as Reeds School District #82. This district was organized in 1878 and consolidated later with other districts to form Hamilton Creek, Dist. #33C.

Reeds School stood on a hillside along the Berlin Road about ten miles southeast of Lebanon. It was of the same type of architecture as other one-room schools constructed during this era. The exception was the entrance and the flagpole that was attached to the front of the building; this extended at a slant up and out over the front entrance.

Later another room was added to the rear to make it into a two-room school. After consolidation, a new, larger, modern school was constructed to the west of the original school, which was still used for kindergarten and extra activities.

In 1971 fire destroyed much of the large school. It was rebuilt and is in use for grades one through eight, with around 240 children in attendance. The Reeds School was still being used for kindergarten and instrumental music instruction.

On April 14, 1982 fire struck again. This time in the small school, causing much damage. The Statesman Journal, Salem, in the June 4, 1982 issue states: "The fire ravaged Reed building at Hamilton Creek School. In Lebanon; it will not be rebuilt." A kindergarten room is to be added to the new school.

***Ref: From the scrapbook of Ella Mae Swanson, and the Statesman Journal papers.
Drawn on location, 1972.***



Hamilton Creek School: Sketched in 1972, this old building (known as Reed School) was used until 1995. It is still standing today and is on the Linn County Register of Historic Resources.