The Clarkson Historical Society

The Clarkson Academy at 8343 Ridge Road West, Clarkson, NY 14430

www.clarksonhistoricalsociety.org

Seymour Library Home-Schooled Students Event:

"What Was A School Day Like 150 Years Ago?"

Thursday, May 21, 2026

On Thursday, May 21st, 2026, The Clarkson Historical Society was pleased to host over two dozen home-schooled children of all ages, along with their parents and grandparents, for a very realistic look at what a typical school day was like in the Clarkson Academy 150 years ago. This event was coordinated by Beth Woodruff from the Seymour Library staff, CHS Board members Anita O'Brien, Bonnie Howlett and Chris Graham, along with Town of Clarkson Historian Leanna Hale.

The "day" started with the ringing of the recently-refurbished original 1853 school bell, the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and a welcome assembly on the Academy's front steps. We then moved to the second floor, which is permanently set up with dozens of period-correct student desks, chalkboards, textbooks and maps. This backdrop provided a lively look at what subjects were taught, what was expected of each pupil, and a brief lesson on how to write their names in cursive. After a brief "recess" and a water break (not from the nearby Brockport Creek!) we moved down to the first floor, where several exhibit tables encouraged interaction with many different antique toys, lunchpails, books and other teaching equipment. The school day ended with a rousing hands-on experience with games popular with schoolchildren "back in the day".

Also on display was a table full of artifacts "Found in the Ground", unearthed last Fall by CHS member and metal detectorist Matt Bacchetta and a team of archaeologists and geologists from SUNY Brockport, during the search of our back lot for the original foundation remains of the 1836 wooden structure that first housed the Clarkson Academy. This building burned to the ground in December of 1852. Students and parents alike enjoyed handling these relics from the past, especially the charred and twisted remains of the coal-fired heating stove...the most likely culprit in this fire.

The present-day brick two-story "Greek Revival" schoolhouse was built immediately afterwards, continuing on for more than one hundred years as The Academy and later as the Clarkson High School, when it was shut down in 1956 as the school was merged into the Brockport Central School District.

See Pictures Below.




EXIT





