

From Classrooms to Community Hub

Echoes From the Past – Essav #7



**The Hammonds Plains School
as it looked in 1939**

Today, the Hammonds Plains Community Center stands opposite the Hammonds Plains Fire Department as a multipurpose center ready to greet the community for any number of social, recreational or business functions, but, how many know the intriguing history of the center?

The building was originally built by residents in 1939 as the community school. It served the educational needs of the children of Hammonds Plains for 28 years until Hammonds Plains Consolidated School was built in 1967. The original school opened as a two classroom building with 51 students registered. The school didn't have electricity when it opened and had two external outhouses attached to it along with a wood shed. Not surprising, the students didn't seem as interested in having a bathroom break during the winter as much as they did during the spring and fall seasons.

The students of the 1940's often told stories of their baseball games in which the Hammonds Plains Road was part of the playing field. Interesting enough, the students didn't have to yell 'car' very often and as such, very games were interrupted by passing vehicles.

To keep up with the post WW2 growth in Hammonds Plains, the school added a full basement and two additional classrooms during the 1940's-50's. During this time the Labour Day Picnic became a celebrated event as the whole community devoted their time and resources to hold the annual fair each year complete with games of chance, a community supper and dance to fund the operation of the school. Folks came from far and wide to try those famous Hammonds Plains homemade pies! Seniors still talk about the year the Labour Day Picnic was held during a hurricane and what they had to do to secure everything.

With construction of Hammonds Plains Consolidated School, the old school was turned into a Community Hall, including a full kitchen and bar. The Hammonds Plains Fire Commissioners managed its operation. Monday nights became the social evening of the week with firefighting training. After the volunteer Fire Fighters met to train and the serious stuff was over, it was known that folks gathered to share a slightly inflated yarn or two.

During the past 30 years, conversion from a Fire Department asset to operation by a non-profit society has taken place. In recent years, the building has been repurposed as a community center with significant capital investment to address safety concerns and operating inefficiencies.

Today the Community Center offers a wide assortment of activities and with a proper baseball field located in the rear of the property, our 80 year old guardian angel no longer needs to protect the youth from oncoming cars as they chase after base balls.