

A History of the **Coram Schoolhouse**

The first record of a school in Coram is found in 1811 when Dr. Samuel Norton purchased the meetinghouse "used for a schoolhouse." It stood in the triangle in front of what is now the Methodist Church (*think roughly where the Coram Smoke Shop currently is on Rte. 25*). The original school was taken apart and used in the construction of a home.

In 1813 the Town of Brookhaven was divided into school districts. The boundaries laid out were measured by the distance a boy could walk to school. In the original division Coram was district 10 and is described as follows: "No. 10 is to embrace the inhabitants of Coram as far west as James Norton's." The eastern boundary although not clearly defined included up to Swezeytown.

The school built in 1813 was used until 1900 when it was condemned and a new one built to replace it. A beautiful wooded knoll known as Mt. Tabor rising sixty feet formed the background of the new school's property. Mt. Tabor was the site of religious revivals as well as being a favorite sleigh - riding area for locals. »



The first record we found of Coram hiring a teacher was in 1814 when **Elijah Terry**¹ was hired to keep a Common English School. The people of Coram agreed to pay him one dollar and seventy-five cents for each student sent to school. Each parent agreed to provide ½ cord of firewood as payment for each child sent to school. Another form of teacher pay that Mr. Terry enjoyed was to receive one week's board at the home of each student who attended the Coram School.

School furnishings were sparse with students working on a high slanted desk attached to the wall. Backless benches served as chairs. The student's ages ranged from 5-21 in this one room schoolhouse.

Edwin Hawkins (*later of Coram Rug Works fame and fortune*), a student of the one room schoolhouse in the early 1930's, remembered "the older children helping to teach the younger ones" a system he recalled "that seemed to work." The old schoolhouse was a simple structure

measuring 20 feet by 30 feet. It had twin outhouses in the back and Hawkins remembers "pushing on the girls outhouse when it was occupied." In the same breath he recalled having to "go out and cut hickory switches (branches) which would be used by the teacher for striking the hands of poorly behaved students." Doris (Faron) Bayles recalled the "water fountain as being a bucket of well water with a ladle in it."



By 1950 Coram was "busting at the seams (sic)." Grades one and two had 30 students. An additional 120 students for grades 3-12 were transported to the Port Jefferson Schools. In 1951 the board of education Edwin Hawkins, Hugh Fingar and William Nilsson outlined a plan for a new school. The school built in 1900 cost \$700. This new brick building with 4 classrooms and an auditorium would cost \$115,000. This would serve grades 1-6, with the secondary students still going to Port Jefferson.

This structure would be the first unit of a 28-room school. The new school was built on Coram Mt. Sinai Road on a 10-acre parcel of land given to the district by the estate of Winfield Davis.

In 1959 Coram joined with Yaphank, Middle Island and Ridge to form the Middle Island School District. The name would later be changed to Longwood Central Schools.

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1. Elijah Terry - likely the son of Brewster Terry and Elizabeth Terry; daughter of Elijah and Mary Davis. Brewster Terry was a Revolutionary War veteran and is buried in the Davis Family Cemetery located behind the Davis Town Meeting House (Lester H. Davis House) on Middle Country Rd. See Davis Town Meeting House Society [website](#) for cemetery pictures and listings.

➤ See an actual 1811 [attendance list](#)!

➤ See film of Coram School-**1942** (or was it **1952?**) - two days before closing; new Coram Elementary School Dedication; Lester Davis farm... [VIDEO](#)

From **Longwood's Journey** - Information compiled by: *Cassie Rivera, Johnny Moran, Danny O'Hagan*