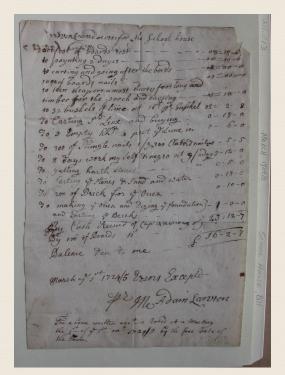
#### SCHOOLHOUSE CONSTRUCTION



IN THE COLLECTION OF THE PORTSMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS THE ORIGINAL BILL FOR THE WORK DONE TO CONSTRUCT THE SCHOOL. THIS DOCUMENT GIVES US SOME INTERESTING DETAILS ABOUT WHAT THE SCHOOLHOUSE LOOKED LIKE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM.

IT HAD AN OVEN MADE OF 200 BRICKS. IT HAD A STONE HEARTH. ADAM LAWTON AND A "NEGRO" WORKED FOR 8 DAYS ON THE BUILDING. IT WAS COMPLETED IN MARCH 1725. IT IS LISTED AS 24/25 BECAUSE OF THE CHANGE OVER IN THE CALENDAR. THERE WAS A PORCH. LOTS OF LIME WAS USED IN THE BUILDING. IT TOOK 2 DAYS TO PAINT. SOME OF THE BOARDS WERE AS LONG AS 30 FEET.

### SOUTHERMOST SCHOOL SERVED MANY PURPOSES.

As one of the few public buildings in town, it was also used for many purposes including town meetings, church services and sheltering needy families. Town records show that the uncompleted building was used for a Town Meeting in 1723 - two years before it opened as a school.

In its original location there was an upstairs hearth in the school room that provided warmth for the classroom. In the cellar was an oven. Some historians believe the school was built in a way that the schoolmaster's family could live there. The town was to support the building and the students' families provided room and board for the schoolmaster and his family. We know from town records that Schoolmaster Preston and his family stayed close by at the home of the Strange family. When the schoolmaster James Preston became ill in 1730 and later died, the Strange family refused to board them any longer. The Preston family found themselves living in the cellar of the school. Later on the Strange family would find themselves living in the school when they were destitute, but the town removed them in 1746 to refurbish the school and use it for its original purpose.

PREPARED FOR THE PORTSMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY G. SCHMIDT

# SOUTHERMOST SCHOOL



RHODE ISLAND'S
OLDEST ONE
ROOM SCHOOL
HOUSE

1725 - 2025

Portsmouth,

Rhode Island

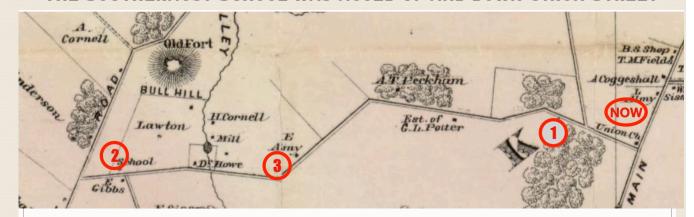




"FOR THE BETTER
ENCOURAGEMENT OF BRINGING UP
AND EDUCATING CHILDREN IN
LITTERAL (I.E FACTUAL) LEARNING."
THESE WERE THE WORDS OF WILLIAM
SANFORD IN 1776 WHEN HE
DONATED A PLOT OF LAND OFF UNION
STREET FOR A SCHOOL SERVING
SOUTH PORTSMOUTH. WITH A PLOT
TO BUILD ON, THE MEMBERS OF THE
PORTSMOUTH TOWN MEETING
DECIDED TO BUILD TWO SCHOOLS
"HAVING CONSIDERED HOW
EXCELLENT AN ORNAMENT LEARNING
IS TO MANKIND."

NEWPORT AND PROVIDENCE
HAD SCHOOLS, BUT THEY WERE
ASSOCIATED WITH A CHURCH OR
MEETING HOUSE. PORTSMOUTH
RESIDENTS WERE VOTING FOR A
SCHOOL THAT WOULD EDUCATE
CHILDREN REGARDLESS OF
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION - A PUBLIC
SCHOOL. IN ITS FIRST YEARS THE
STUDENTS AT SOUTHERMOST SCHOOL
WOULD ONLY BE BOYS AND THEIR
TEACHERS ONLY MON.

#### THE SOUTHERMOST SCHOOL WAS MOVED UP AND DOWN UNION STREET



## Dripps Map 1870

FIRST LOCATION: ON UNION STREET TO THE WEST OF MIDDLE ROAD.

SECOND LOCATION: AROUND 1800 IT WAS MOVED CLOSE TO WEST MAIN ROAD. IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT THE ENTRYWAY WAS ADDED TO THE SCHOOL

THIRD LOCATION: BY 1863 THE SCHOOL WAS NO LONGER NEEDED. IT WAS REPLACED BY THE GIBBS SCHOOL. THE SCHOOLHOUSE WENT TO AUCTION AND WENT TO THE ALMY LAKESIDE FARM WITH TWO TEAMS OF OXEN PULLING IT DOWN UNION STREET. IT WAS USED AS A TACK HOUSE ON THE FARM.

PRESENT LOCATION: IN 1952 THE HALL FAMILY, THE OWNERS OF THE LAKESIDE FARM, DONATED THE SOUTHERMOST SCHOOL TO THE PORTSMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY. TODAY IT IS LOCATED ON THE GROUNDS OF THE SOCIETY AND HAS BEEN RESTORED THROUGH THE YEARS.

#### LIST OF RULES FOUND IN SOUTHERMOST SCHOOL CIRCA 1863

- Boys and girls playing together 1 lash
- Fighting at School 5 lashes
- Quarreling at school 3 lashes
- Climbing for every foot over 3ft up a tree 1
- Telling tales out of school 8 lashes
- Giving each other ill names 3 lashes
- Misbehaving to girls 10 lashes
- Leaving school without leave of the teacher –
   4 lashes

- Wearing long fingernails 2 lashes
- Boys going to the girls' play place 3 lashes
- Girls going to the boys' play place 2 lashes
- For every word you miss on your heart lessons without a good excuse – 1 lash
- For not saying yes or no sir or yes or no marm
  2 lashes
- Telling lies 7 lashes
- Swearing at school 9 lashes.