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## BARKER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The article below appeared in the October 19, 2011 edition of the Lockport Union Sun & Journal. Thank you to Joe Olenick, Union Sun & Journal staff reporter who was on hand for this event, for the excellent coverage.

# 100 and counting...

## Barker students reenact same task students completed 100 years ago in honor of anniversary

BY JOE OLENICK

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**BARKER** — Barker students got out of school early one fall day in 1911. The kids were taken to the shores of Lake Ontario in horse drawn hay wagons to collect stones. There they picked up small lake stones which would be used in the construction of their new school.

One hundred years later, Barker students performed the same task in honor of the so called "1911 building," the oldest of the buildings on the Barker campus.

On Tuesday, a group of students took a horse-drawn wagon to Barker Bicentennial Park at Huntington Beach to collect some of those same stones. The event was the Barker School District's kickoff to a year-long celebration of the construction and opening of the building.

The entire student body, community members and district personnel filled the parking lot of the 1911 building Tuesday afternoon.

"This continues to remain one of the most beautiful structures in our community," Superintendent Roger Klatt said.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**GATHERING:** Students collected stones from Lake Ontario and brought them back via a horse drawn wagon.

# 100 ...

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The building, once known as the Union Free School District No. 1, opened in the winter of 1911 and would see a number of additions over the next 100 years. It currently houses Barker's district offices on Quaker Road, its entrance and parking lot faces Haight Road.

On Tuesday, students took their collected stones and gave to the any Barker alumni who were present. The alumni then put the stones into a basket. Barker band and chorus students performed the district's alma mater, followed by "Stars and Stripes Forever."

Lorraine Wayner, the former Somerset town historian, did extensive research on the 1911 building. The horses and wagon were courtesy of Norm and Emily Atwater, Norm's great uncle was the architect of the school.

Tuesday's event was based on the recollection of Hazel Huntington Gardner, a 1914 graduate of Barker who was noted in Wayner's book, titled "Welcome to

Somerset." Gardner recalled that in September 1911, the students were excused at 1 p.m. and taken to the lake. The lake stones they brought back are currently embedded in the concrete decoration on the north and south sides of the 1911 building.

Wayner, whose book will become required reading for Barker students, spoke at Tuesday's event.

"We have a heritage, a treasure here," she said.

Before Barker residents voted in 1911 to build the school, Barker students had to travel to Lyndonville or Wilson for high school, Wayner said. The five acres of land on the corner of Quaker and Haight Roads were bought from a farm. The 1911 building united districts no. 9, 10 and 15.

Since the creation of the 1911 building, the Barker campus has seen some expansion. A 1924 addition on the west end of the building provided a gym with raised seating and a large study hall on the second floor. During Thanksgiving in 1939, a junior/senior high school building was constructed on the grounds. It brought to Barker a new auditorium, cafeteria and

new offices. A shop wing was added which has become the current high school cafeteria.

In 1962 the district added a new elementary wing with a gym and a pool. Five years later the Milford H. Pratt Elementary School was built and attached to all existing Barker buildings.

Board of Education President Gordon Kenyon, a 1971 Barker graduate, said he had many fond memories attending Barker. That included having classes in the 1911 building, right above the board meeting room. He also made a discovery on the building itself.

"A few years ago I learned that one of my great grandfathers is on a gray plaque in front of the building," Kenyon said.

Klatt said the district is planning a number of activities throughout the year to commemorate the 1911 building's opening. One of those events is a community wide dance to be held Jan. 28, 2012, two days before the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the 1911 building.

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