

Aden School
Brentsville School District
White
1897-1946

Source: "Yesterday's Schools" by Lucy Walsh Phinney

A 1935 listing of Prince William County schools by the man who was Superintendent of Schools at that time (Richard C. Haydon) includes an Aden School beginning in 1897. A reference to the Lodge Building in the village of Aden having been used for several years as a temporary schoolhouse prior to 1908 is the only other report found of a school in Aden earlier than 1908. School Board minutes do not mention such a school nor is it found on the 1901 map by Brown of Prince William County. That one existed is probably true, but its size, location and history are unknown.

Aware of what they called the "proliferation of schools" in their district, the Brentsville District School Board, around the turn of the century, began to look at the consolidation of small schools into center schools. In July 1908, the Board voted to consolidate the Hazelwood and Allendale schools into a larger school located in the center of the village of Aden. They agreed to purchase two acres "adjoining the store property" from Mrs. J. P. Smith for \$95 but she changed her mind and withdrew the offer. Not quite three weeks later, the Board voted to buy two acres from Mrs. Smith on the Harrison Ford road as near the cross roads as there is a suitable location. Something went wrong with this arrangement too because before the month was over, the Board rescinded the motion and voted instead to rent the Lodge building at Aden to temporarily accommodate the students from Hazelwood and Allendale schools.

The Board then contracted to have a two room school house built on Fleetwood Drive less than a quarter of a mile from the intersection with Aden Road. On February 17, 1909 the building was inspected by the School Board and accepted into the system. It was called the Aden Sub-center School and served the community's needs for seven years.

At the end of June, 1916, the School Board heard a report that ninety-five to one hundred students were expected to enroll in the Aden School in the fall of 1916. The two-room schoolhouse could not hold such a large number of children so the Board agreed to rent "the hall at Aden" (probably the Lodge Building which had been used several years earlier as a temporary schoolhouse) for seven months at \$5.00 per month. This would serve as a third classroom.

For five years, this rather awkward arrangement continued. Finally in July of 1921 the School Board agreed to build two more classrooms across the rear of the school house using \$208 raised by patrons (parents) who also agreed to pay \$15.00 per month toward a third grade teacher's salary. Several months later, in October, the Board also agreed to add a small (6x10) back porch with a cement floor onto the building.

From the fall of 1921 until the end of the 1924-25 school year, one of the teachers at the Aden School was Miss Cora E. Beahm whose father was principal teacher at the Woodlawn School. From the Aden School, Miss Beahm went to the Nokesville School, Miss Beahm taught with W. Davis Nolley and his wife, Pearle S. Nolley. The three divided up the six grades which were taught there during those years. During the week, Cora Beahm boarded with a widow who lived nearby the school and travelled by buggy to her family's home in Nokesville for the weekends. When Miss Beahm left the Aden School in 1925, her place was taken by Miss Elizabeth Vaughan who went on to a long and distinguished career in education. She taught at Haymarket in the early 1930s before becoming principal at the Occoquan District School in 1934. An elementary school in Woodbridge is named for her.

From the 1934 and 1935 reports by the Superintendent of Schools, Richard Haydon, as well as from memories of students who attended Aden during its final years, a clear picture of the four-room schoolhouse is formed. Set on a concrete slab measuring 50'x61', the building was made of wood painted yellow. Each of the four rooms had a seating capacity of forty-two students although by 1935 only two rooms were being used. Pupils in the first grade used tables and chairs. Primary grades used double adjoining desks while students in the upper grades had single desks. The floor was made of tongue and groove pine and the ceiling was also wood. The inside was painted and there were screens for the twenty-eight windows. A cupola and four chimneys graced the roof line. Wood stoves were the source of heat and janitorial service was provided. There was a water pump on the school grounds but toilet facilities in 1935 were labeled inadequate. The playground space had no equipment and was called "very undesirable" in the superintendent's report.

Enrollment in first through sixth grades in November 1934 was seventy-four students. The average daily attendance that year was sixty-five students, a percentage of 87.8. That enrollment was up from sixty-three the previous year. Of those sixty-three, fifty-four were promoted at year's end, eight failed and one dropped out of school. The two teachers in 1934 were both college graduates with Normal Professional certificates. The Primary teacher had six years' experience; the upper grade teacher had been teaching for eight years.

When the first addition of rooms was put on the Brentsville District High School in Nokesville in 1946, the Aden School consolidated with it and the yellow schoolhouse was put up for sale. It eventually was converted into an apartment house and it continues to be used as such today. It is still yellow with a tin roof and looks much as it did in its heyday as a schoolhouse.

A picture of the Aden School may be seen in "Yesterday's Schools" by Lucy Walsh Phinney