

THE CANNON BRANCH SCHOOL White, 1889-1927

Source: Yesterday's Schools by Lucy Walsh Phinney

In July of 1888, the Manassas School Board ordered a ninth schoolhouse to be built in their district. Though located only two miles from Bennett in Manassas, the center school of the District, poor transportation meant a need for a neighborhood school. In this case a school was needed to serve the families along Cannon Branch, named for a family named Cannon who had a farm in the area. The Board paid \$1.00 for the deed to a piece of land on Isaac Harley's Farm near the point "where Cannon's Branch crosses the Manassas and Milford Mills public road", across from where Godwin Drive intersects present day Nokesville Road (Route 28). Funds for the school were to come from the tax levies of 1888 and 1889.

The Cannon Branch School was unique because it was built to serve children of the German Baptist Brethren, whose 'plain garb, Pennsylvania Dutch language, and tendency to stay to themselves caused trouble at times with the non-Brethren. Their northern identity in this war torn southern land did not help. They were often looked upon as "peculiar" by others, and their efforts to have a school built in their community at first met with resistance. George C. Round, the long time and influential champion of public education in the County, came to their aid, however, and helped them get the school they needed.