

School #2 and Its Quilt Project

There were 20 school districts in nineteenth century Brighton but as the town was gradually annexed by the city of Rochester, those districts and the people they served were subsumed into the city. By 1905, only ten remained, including #2 school, located on Winton Road near the northwest corner of Winton and East Avenue. The large brick school did not house all the students in the district. A four-room frame annex served the population in the northern part of the town, home to the Holland Settlement.

School # 2 on North Avenue (now Winton Road North) was a substantial brick building constructed in the early 1900s. After the annexation of the village of Brighton in 1905, the school became District #1 of the Rochester City School District. RCSD later built a modern #1 school on Hillside Avenue, closing the former #2 school building and making it available for use as a library, the Winton Road branch of the Rochester Public Library. In 1968, when Central Trust Bank built a bank and parking garage on the site, the library moved to new quarters on Winton Road near Atlantic Avenue where it remains today. The East Avenue Wegman's store occupies the Central Trust site today.

The elementary school curriculum often included instruction on practical life skills that included sewing and other domestic arts. The quilt squares pictured were embroidered by children and teachers at #2 school about 1901 or 1902. The 90 squares that comprise the quilt, about a modern double bed size, are banded by red cotton strips. Each square is embroidered with a flower, bird, person, or scene and signed with the name or initials of the person who created it. Called redwork, its name derives from the Turkey red cotton embroidery thread that became popular in the nineteenth century because it was inexpensive and colorfast. The development of iron-on transfer patterns in the 1870s made a myriad of designs available for the basic stem stitch used in the execution of the redwork block.

Teacher Ella Perrin chose a stylized flower for her design; Henry Beckwith embroidered a horse. Mamie Rowerdink selected a water lily for her square. George Madigan chose a flower. Ruth Wallace embroidered a cat and fishbowl while her sister, Mabel, chose a mother and child image.

The quilt was preserved by teacher Kate Lotz Lays who in later years passed it on to her pupil, Lorinda Duffy Heveron. Duffy descendants donated it to the Brighton Central School District who gave it to the Brighton town historian for safe keeping.

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