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Raven Hill Discovery Center is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation.

Mission: Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

To: Friends and Family everywhere
From: Cheri and Raven Hill
Date: January 16, 2021
Re: Weekly update

Greetings, Everyone!

The Schoolhouse with all of its exhibits is one of the most popular places at Raven Hill. It is a natural conversation starter as family members reminisce about their school days. Everyone loves to ring the school bell as they enter and leave. Families spend quality time together. Each child takes their turn playing the role of teacher, writing on the chalk boards and using the old textbooks for reading and math. Different generations gravitate to the school desk they remember from their childhood and families exit with smiles on their faces. The Schoolhouse gives visitors the gift of time and helps them experience a bit of the past.



The Schoolhouse patiently waits for summer visitors to come ring the bell and play school. Everyone gets a chance to be teacher, if they want.



Betty Hoffmann of Charlevoix donated the school bell. It's hard to ring it just once!



Look closely and you can see the slate pencils attached with string. Some slate boards were bound with leather or cloth around the wooden frame and sometimes two slate boards were hinged together.

Children used slate boards at school because paper was too expensive. They wrote with slate pencils, NOT chalk. Often, the slate pencils were fastened to the slate board with a string. Students used the same slate board all through their school years from first grade to grade eight. If it got dropped and cracked, they had to use it like that. The old slate boards on the wall, show what students used for their lessons and are a tribute to Vera Marie Shippy Byers, my grandmother, who taught in a similar one-room schoolhouse.



Teacher and student work on a grammar lesson. Later, roles reversed. Teacher became student and student became teacher!

If the Schoolhouse walls could talk, visitors could learn of its origins and its final move to Raven Hill. They would find that the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) built the building in the 1930's to serve as Wilson Town Hall. In 1995, after a new town hall building was completed, the old structure was donated to Raven Hill. Its journey of over a mile would start early one fall morning and take most of the day. The little building was loaded onto a truck and made its way down C-48, where utility crews held up the overhead wires, so the future schoolhouse could safely pass under. Then it was maneuvered onto the narrow gravel road, over the creek and, with the help of a second truck stationed at the top of the steep hill, the building was slowly driven **and** pulled to the top of the hill. Once at the top, the Schoolhouse made its way across the empty field along the ridge to its current location.

Later, after an ice floe hit the floating dock system at the Irish Boat Shop in Charlevoix, part of the salvaged wood became the deck and covered entryway for the Schoolhouse. A Raven Hill volunteer added a sign for Raven Hill School, including the Spanish word for school, "Escuela". An old-fashioned water pump entices kids to pretend-pump water, just as children would have done years ago. And, of course, there's the ever-present school bell. Author Lon Watters says, "A school is a building which has four walls with tomorrow inside." I like that idea.

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The Schoolhouse is a popular subject for artists. Luke Buck of Ninevah, Indiana painted this watercolor in 2015 and donated the original to Raven Hill. If you are interested, *The Old School House*, a 10" X 15" Giclee' watercolor print of Luke's painting (right), is available for purchase at \$30 apiece.



I continue adding email addresses. If you know of anyone who might be like to receive our weekly updates, please send email addresses to info@miravenhill.org and I will be glad to add their names. Previous updates are available on our website—www.MiRavenHill.org

Artists often take some liberties in their artwork. No, there really isn't a tire swing at the Raven Hill Schoolhouse!
Maybe there needs to be one!

I enjoy hearing from you, so text me or call my cell at 231.675.6025 or you can email me anytime. My email address is cheri@miravenhill.org. Meanwhile, continue playing it safe: wash your hands often, wear your masks, socially distance and stay away from crowds.



I think this quote from author Rasheed Ogunlaru might help during these days, when we are weighed down and overwhelmed with the state of our world: "Always take some of the play, fun, freedom and wonder of the weekend into your week and your work." Thinking positive thoughts every day can't hurt.

(Left) Different liberties were taken by Margaret Moran in her watercolor!
No beautiful flowers exist near the Schoolhouse either!