



# THE LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE THAT COULD

A 19TH CENTURY BUILDING IS BACK IN SHAPE TO EDUCATE A NEW GENERATION.

STORY BY KAREN PYLE TRENT | PHOTOS BY PATRICK DODSON

Between 1930 and 1936, Pauline Williman walked each weekday to School #5 in Knox, New York. Not far from where she lived, the little one-room schoolhouse welcomed young students who were eager for an education. But over the years, the students moved on to newer, larger buildings, and little ol' #5 fell into disrepair.

Today, School #5 stands restored, a project completed by the Kiwanis Club of the Helderbergs, New York. Williman, a member of that club, appreciates the fact that history has come full circle for her and the little building that is the source of many childhood memories.

"This is quite nostalgic for me," says the 89-year-old Williman, who attended School #5 through the eighth grade. "I'm very happy about it. That school was a crucial part of my life."

Built in the late 1890s, the building had seen better days when the Helderbergs Kiwanians stepped in to get it back into shape.

"The flooring was rotted," says Dan Driscoll, a past president of the Helderbergs club who headed up the restora-

tion effort. "At one point, the building had been moved off its foundation. We had to jack it up and redo the foundation."

Grants and gift cards from two local businesses, as well as the proceeds of a fundraising dinner, garnered US\$1,605 to finance the renovation. Kiwanians provided the elbow grease.

The Helderbergs Kiwanis Club has continued the story of School #5 by writing a book about the building, its history and the restoration. One of the most reward-

ing parts of the process, says Driscoll, was collecting memories from Williman and other former students.

School #5 is located at Thatcher State Park, where children still enter its door, but this time for educational tours. It now is listed on the (US) National Register of Historic Places, which is a source of pride for the community.

"I love the little school," says Williman (opposite page). "It was a joy to go there as a child. I'm proud to be an alumni."



