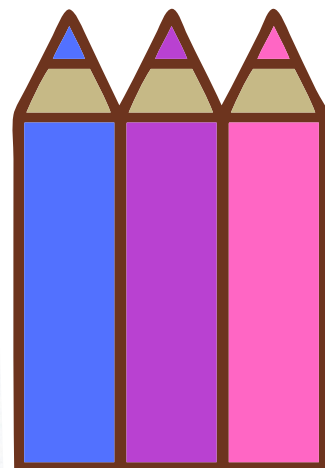
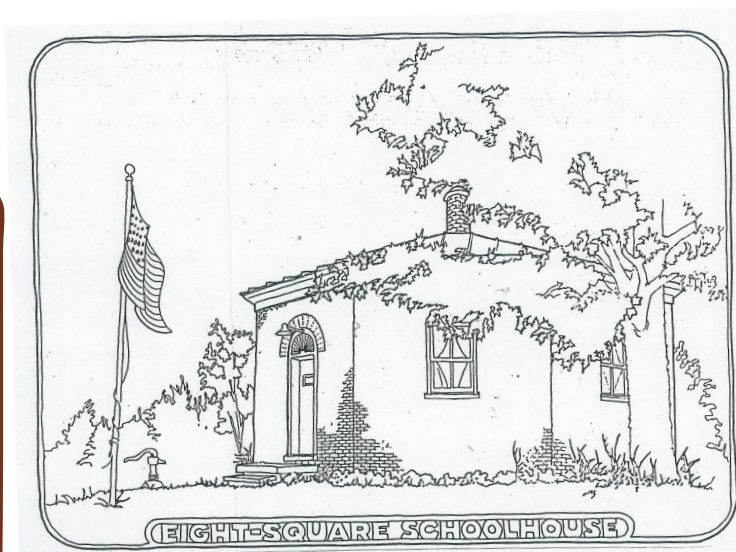


*The History Center in Tompkins County Presents the*

# Eight Square Schoolhouse Coloring Book



Download more activities at [www.thehistorycenter.net/learn](http://www.thehistorycenter.net/learn).

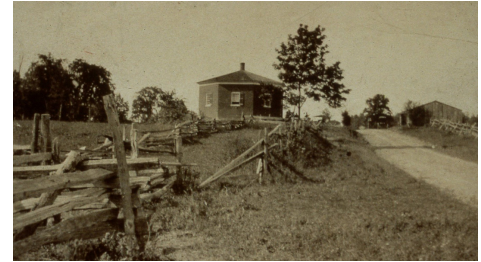
THE  
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In Tompkins County

# The Eight Square Schoolhouse

pg. 1

## History of Eight Square - 1827-1941

The Eight Square Schoolhouse is an original one-room schoolhouse built in 1827 in Dryden, NY. It was operational as a school until 1945. Now, The History Center in Tompkins County runs a living history program at this site to explore a day in the life of students in 1892.



The Eight Square School replaced a wooden plank school that had been built on the same site in 1814. The old school was rundown and not nearly big enough for all the children. The trustees of School District #5 voted to move the old school down the road and begin building a new school made of brick.



The trustees hired a man named Balcolm from McLean as their master builder and worked side by side with him to build a school that would be "Twenty eight feet in the clear and eight square." Some of the early settlers of the area had come from the Delaware Valley originally and had probably seen similar octagonal buildings there.

The brick for the school came from the nearby brickyard of Jeremiah Snyder and from the Grover-Hammond Metzgar brickyard.

The corner bricks were cast specifically for their octagonal shape, and the chimney bricks were cast in a circular form. The school cost \$550.88 to build; the trustees had collected only \$350 in school taxes for the building, so they had to raise additional money to pay the extra cost.

The Eight Square School served as a one-room school for the children of the district until 1941 when the Dryden School District centralized and began busing the children into Dryden or Freeville to attend school.



# The Eight Square Schoolhouse

pg. 2

## History of Eight Square - 1955-Today



In 1955 the ownership of the school was transferred to the DeWitt Historical Society (DHS). The DeWitt Historical Society later restructured and became The History Center in Tompkins County in 2004. The Eight Square Schoolhouse became the BIGGEST item in the Historical Societies archival collection.

In the 1980s fourth grade teachers from across the county collaborated with DHS to take their classes to the school one day a year for an authentic field trip to remind their students what school had been like only a few generations earlier.

In 1991 DHS developed a new and more historically accurate curriculum to be used for field trips at the school, and in 1992 DHS began hiring and training it's own teachers for the "Living History" program.

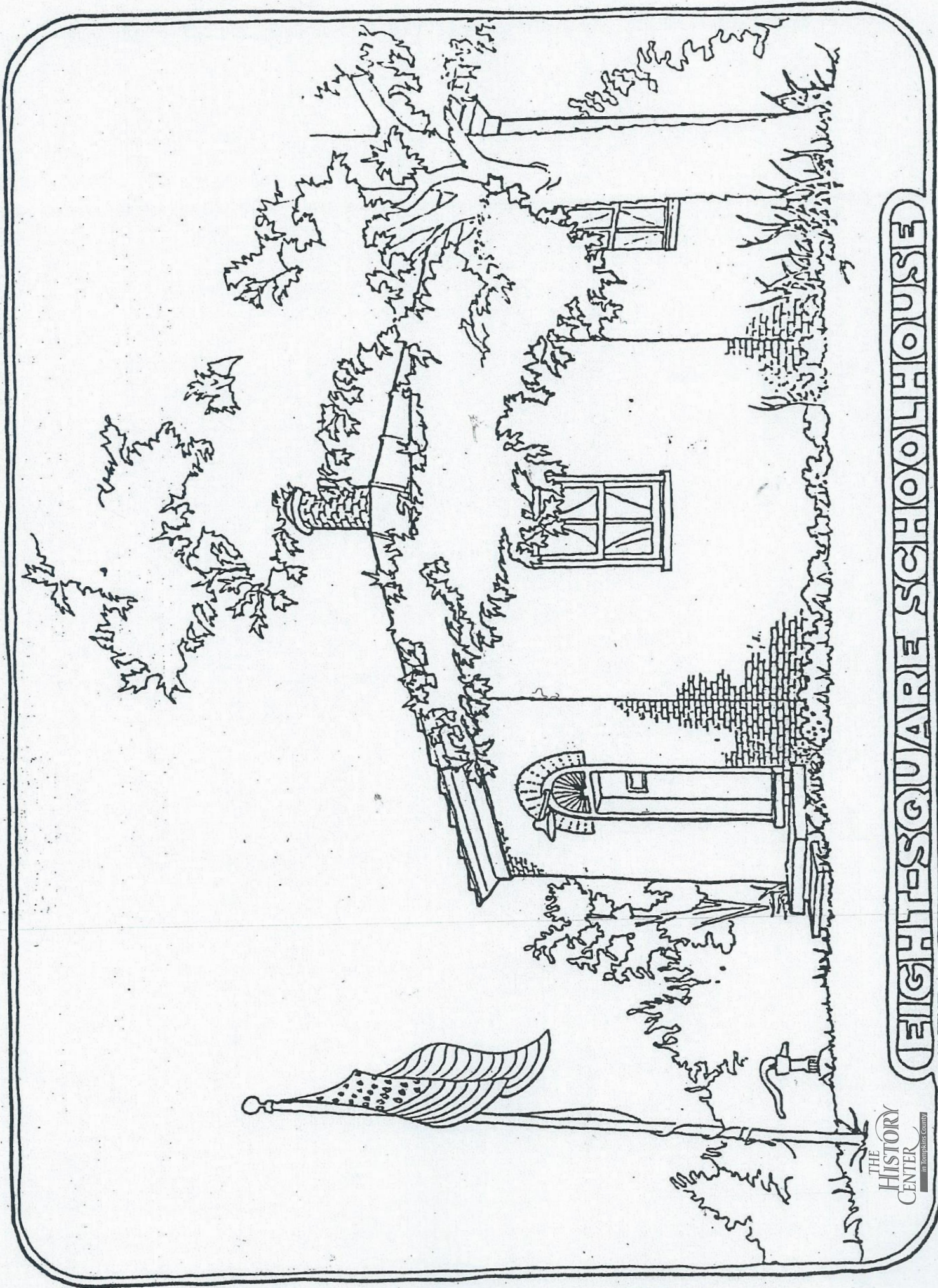


The Eight Square Schoolhouse is now the earliest school structure still existing in Tompkins County, and the only brick octagonal schoolhouse left standing in New York State. In 1994 it was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places and in 2000 became an official project of Save America's Treasures.



The History Center's 'Eight Square Schoolhouse 1892 Living History Program' joined the 'Kids Discover the Trail! (KDT!) program in 2005. Offering living history field trip experiences to fourth grade classrooms in the Ithaca City School District (ICSD).

In this way the Eight Square Schoolhouse continues on it's century long journey as a learning space for Tompkins County students.



THE HISTORY CENTER in Tompkins County

EIGHT-SQUARE SCHOOLHOUSE

# What Was a One-Room Schoolhouse?



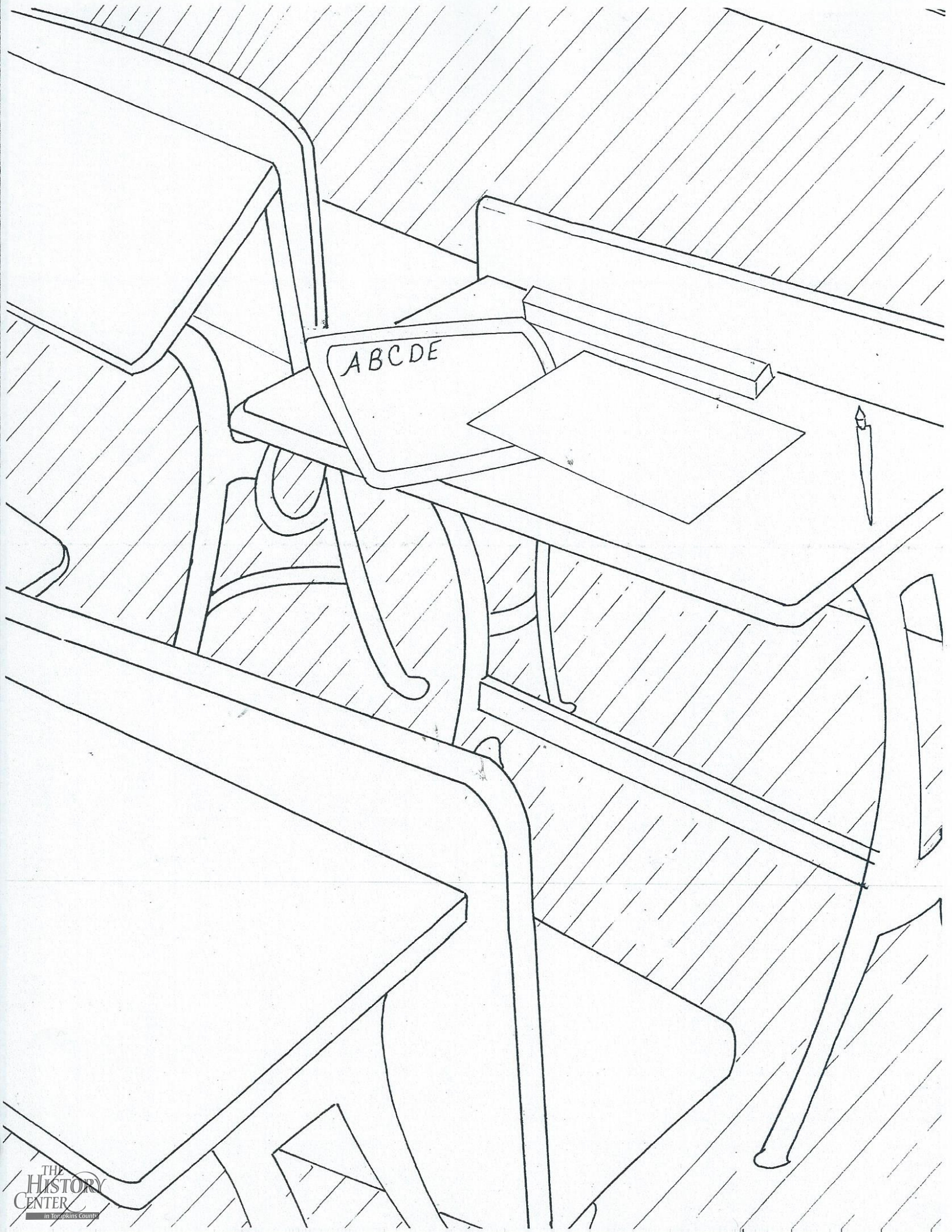
The children walked to the schoolhouse. Sometimes they walked a mile or even farther. They walked on cold and snowy days too.



There was one teacher in a one-room school. The teacher swept the school, started the wood stove to heat the school, and taught every subject for all grades.





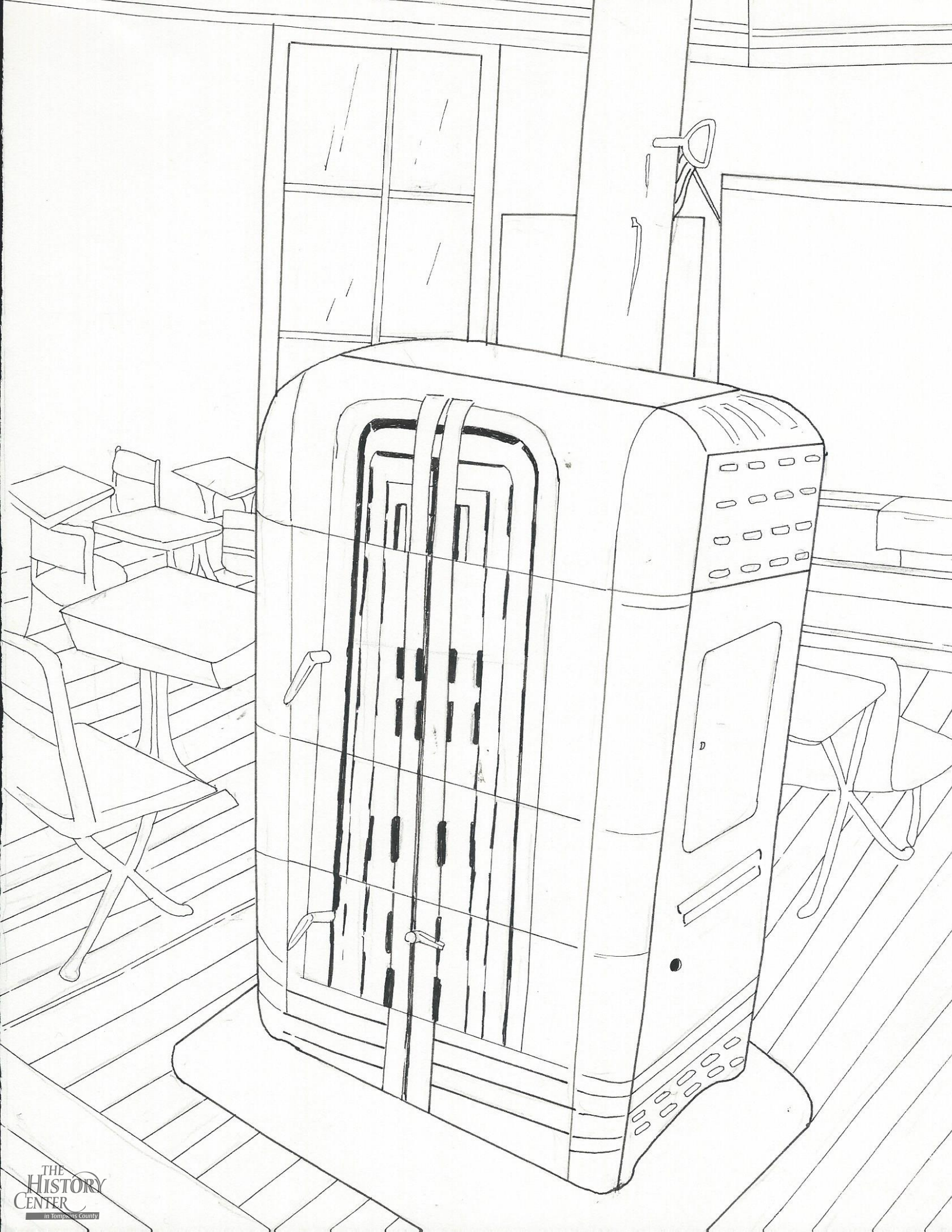


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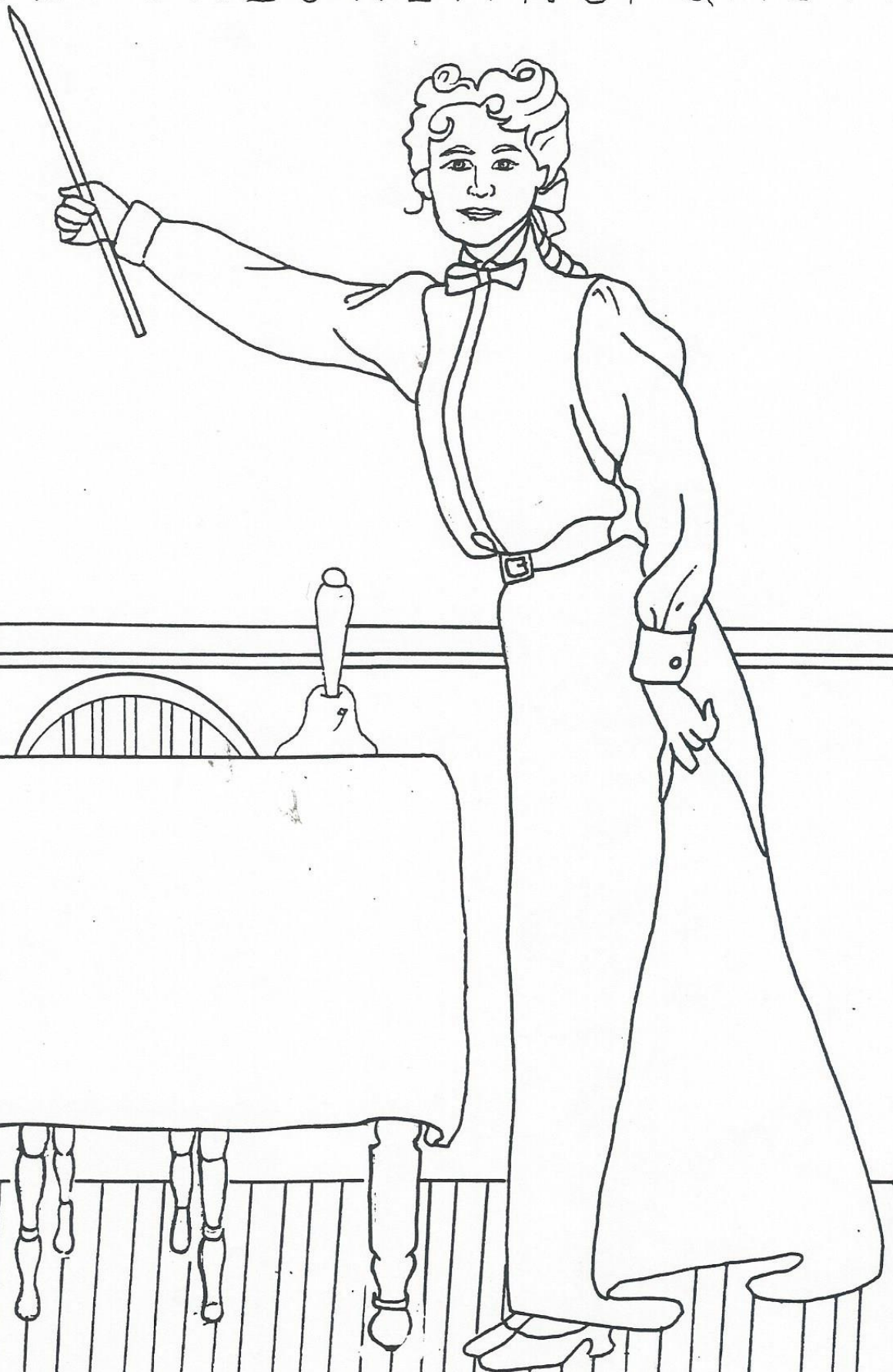








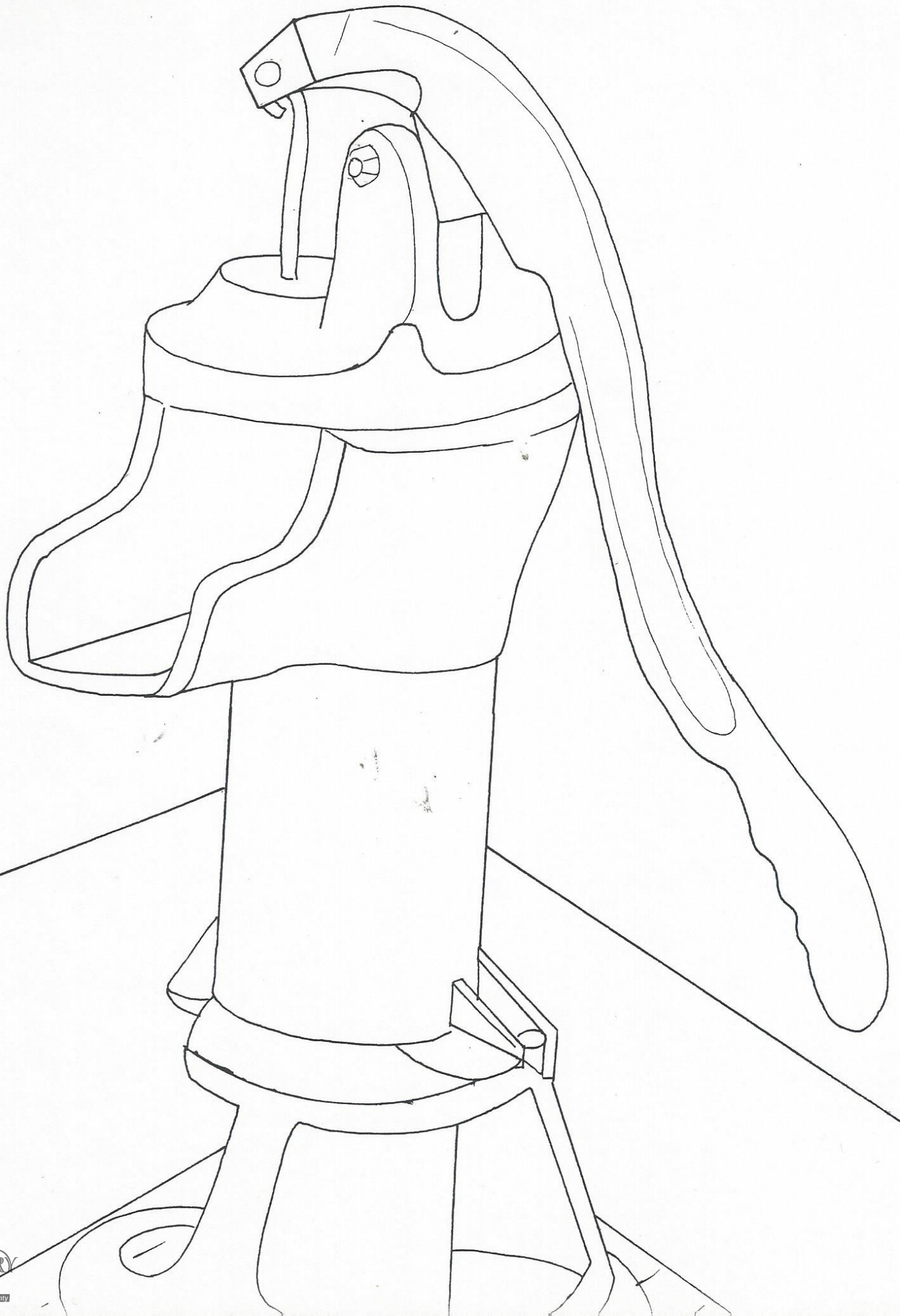
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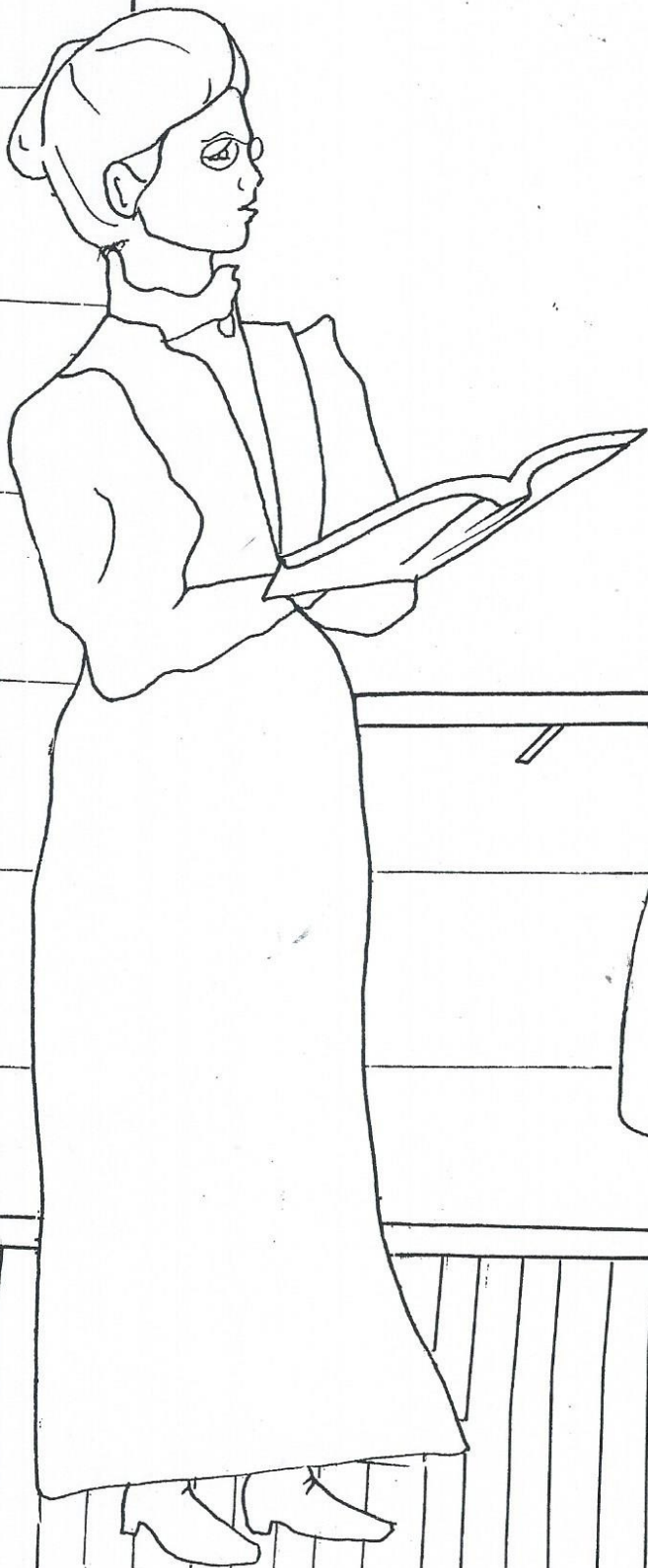




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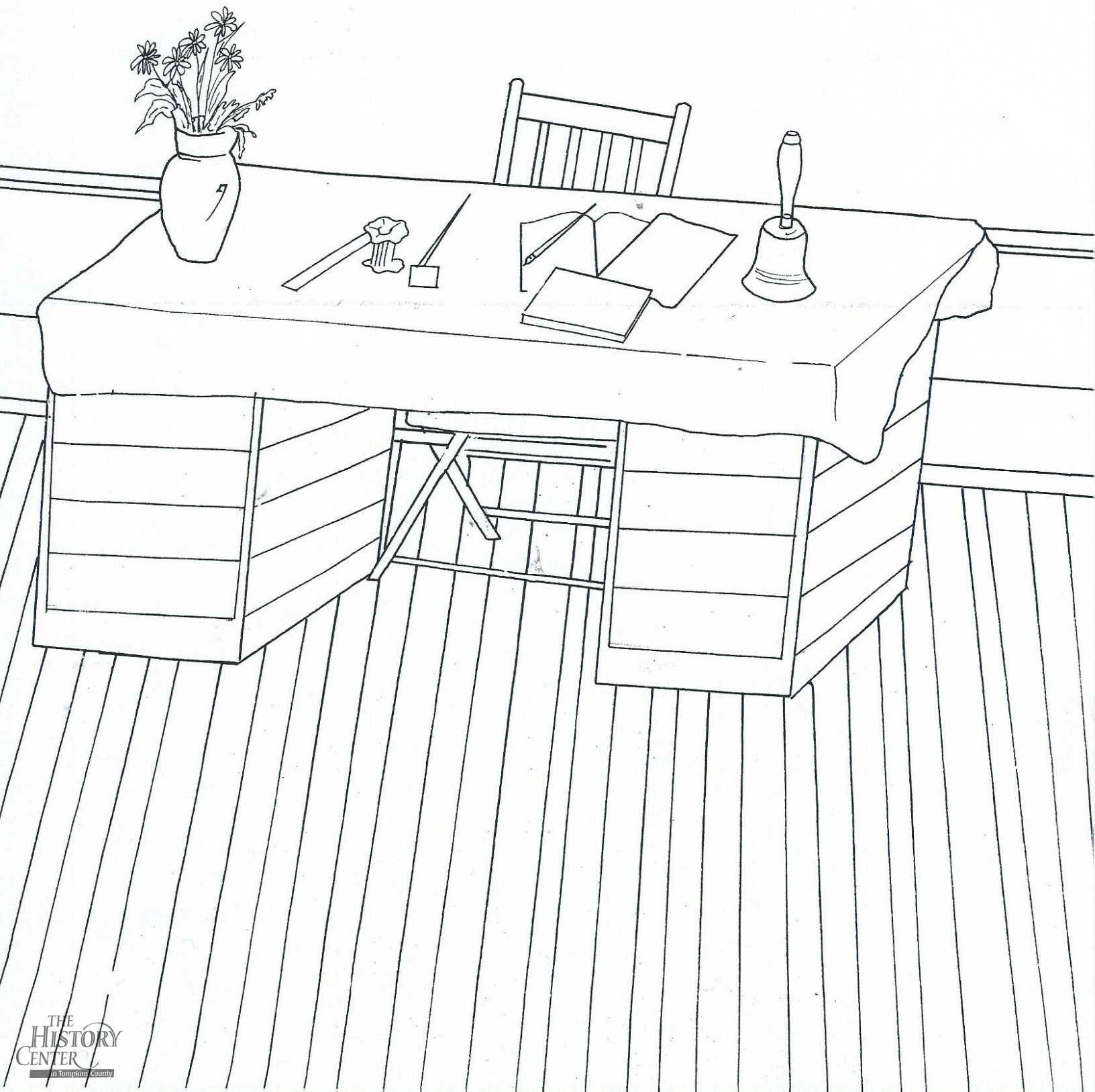
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# THE HISTORY CENTER

in Tompkins County

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*The pictures in this booklet were re-discovered in the education files at The History Center in 2024. We would be happy to update these materials with proper artist attribution. Please reach out if you know who did the original drawings!*



## Council on the Arts

**The History Center in Tompkins County's 2023 programs and exhibits were made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.**