ROCHESTER SCHOOL

According to The History of Racine and Kenosha Counties circa 1879 by C. W. Butterfield:

"The first school building was raised in 1840, but the first school opened was that taught in 1837 by Miss Dyer, a sister of Dr. Dyer, of Burlington."

School District No. 2 (East of the Fox River), a wooden building was erected in 1848. Mrs. Kathleen Ela told me this was located on the hill near the intersection of what is now State Highway 36 and Country Trunk D. The first teacher at District Number 2 was Miss Sarah Whitman, the wife of Mr. Henry Cady, the genial Postmaster of Rochester. The building itself as A-frame and cost $700. Miss Whitman had charge of about 100 pupils. Mrs. Ela told me that in 1894, after District #2 had merged with the school on the west side of the river, the District #2 school house was moved across the ice of the Fox River on runners to be used as a town hall. While on the ice, the building fell through, and after great difficulty recovering it, was placed on the north side of Main Street between what is now the library and the residence on the northwest corner of Front and Main Streets (formerly a store and gas station). It served as the town hall for many years.

A teaching certificate belonging to a Miss Mary E. Hewitt and a picture of her and some of her students was found. She taught in Rochester in 1869. Mrs. Donna Zabler contributed these items and little else is known. Looking at the photograph poses the questions "Why are there only girls in the picture?" and "Where might it have been taken?" Also, west of Rochester is Pleasant View School, also known as Hewitt School. Is there a connection there?

After Rochester Districts #1 and #2 merged on the west side of the river, a higher department was authorized. Mrs. Ela said she had heard that the school on the hill (near the current schoolhouse) was originally a single story, and after the merger a second story was added.

In 1906 a new Rochester State Graded School was built on the hill.

About 1908 the two-story white clapboard schoolhouse was moved down the hill and set up a lot on Front Street adjacent to the river. It still stands there today, being the second structure north of the bridge and is currently used as a house.

In 1954 four classrooms were added to the two-story red, brick schoolhouse. In the early 1960's the Grant School in Dover consolidated with the village of Rochester.

In the fall of 1968 Rochester consolidated with Waterford Graded School. Children in first through fourth grade went to Waterford Graded School. Students in the 5-8 grades entered the newly completed Fox River Middle School. Kindergarten students were housed in the Rochester red brick schoolhouse. This continued until the spring of 1991 when that facility closed its doors when the new EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL opened its doors August 26, 1991.