



Timeless Teacher

A photographic tribute to the original Dater School
1912-2006

Photographer Edward L. Linde II & Ramsey Historical Society

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Introduction

A few short months ago, the proud lady who stood on School Street for almost a hundred years vanquished forever. She educated five generations of us, watched us grow, nurtured our children, helped us learn to deal with life's challenges and made us smile and laugh. In time, she will be but a distant memory for many of us.

However, the spirit of the original Dater School will never diminish because it has transcended into who we are. You see, she was a timeless teacher. She taught us or our children how to read, how to write, how to help one another and much more. Even if we never attended school here ourselves, she probably taught something about ourselves. She lives on in our collective spirit and our sense of who we are as a community of friends and neighbors.

In America, our social and visual landscape is changing faster than we realize. What was once here is gone tomorrow. Buildings, open spaces, machines, places and cultural icons get discarded or reinvented in our endless pursuit of development. History is not just the study of things in the past. It is also the acknowledgement of this sense of change and the preemptive recording of events, people, structures and other representations of our identity before they are lost forever. It is critically important that we capture the essence of these common elements of our lives so that future generations can understand who we were as a people.

In Ramsey, NJ, there will never be another school like the original Dater School. The crooked walls, exposed plumbing, sloping floors, wide hallways, ancient windows and wooden cupboards all gave this building a character and unique personality which never can be duplicated with today's construction materials and techniques. It is what made this school so special to all of who were fortunate to know her.

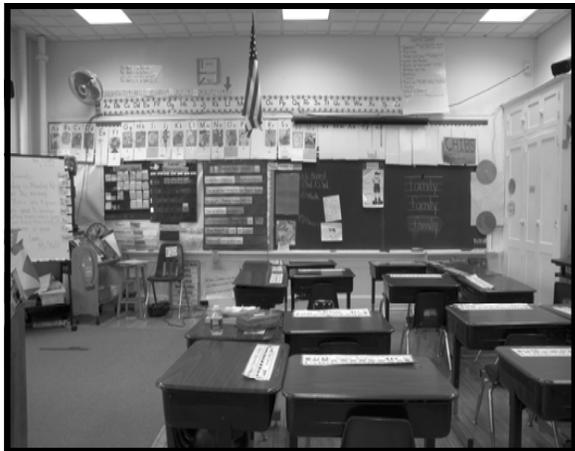
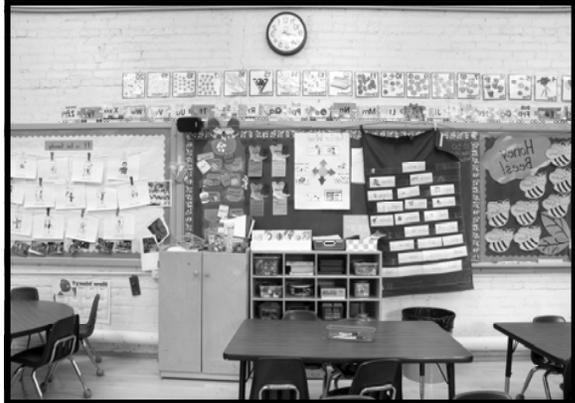
In this body of work, I have attempted to accurately photograph the final years of the original Dater School. My purpose has been to establish a visual record of this beautiful lady and the proud staff of teachers, administrators and support personnel who constitute the real spirit of Dater School. They are, in fact, the true timeless teacher.

Edward L. Linde II

Images



Images



Images



Acknowledgements

The Ramsey Historical Society, the Ramsey Educational Foundation, the Dater PTO and photographer Ed Linde profusely thank Dr. Lynn Mintz and former superintendent Mr. Bruce DeYoung for their support in launching and backing this project. Both of them understood the importance of creating a photographic documentation of the original Dater School for historic preservation purposes.

We would like to thank the outstanding faculty and staff at Dater School who understood the purpose of this project and demonstrated a level of enthusiasm that was visibly contagious. All one has to do is view the images of the teachers and staff and you realize that these individuals are true professionals who love their students and Dater School. Upon reviewing the prints in 2006, former Mayor Richard Muti made the observation that these teachers appear almost heroic and immensely proud of what they do. That is what I was hoping to achieve in my work.

We would also like to thank our Ramsey neighbors and friends for their endorsement of this project. Ramsey, NJ represents the sense of community that our parents and grandparents knew in small town America. Sadly, places like Ramsey are disappearing from the American landscape as developers attempt to homogenize our society with a disregard for our past and heritage. Many individuals in Ramsey contributed to this project in many forms.

The photographer would like to acknowledge his friends in Ramsey who believed in this project and encouraged his growth as a photographer.

Edward L. Linde II

Technical Data

The images in this exhibit were taken with either a Nikon D200 or Nikon D70 digital single lens reflex camera and printed on an Epson R220 inkjet printer. For all interior photographs, the cameras were attached to a tripod. Images were sharpened and had black & white conversion and contrast adjustment done in Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0. Images were not cropped or manipulated but rather utilized straight out of the camera.

ISO settings were kept at 100 (Nikon D200) or 200 (Nikon D70) for maximum image quality. With the exception of three photographs, all exposures were done using available light to reflect the proper atmosphere of the classrooms and the building. Most exposures required a shutter speed of 1-2 seconds which required the subjects to remain still yet natural.

The interior of the Original Dater School posed a few photographic challenges. First, many of the walls were not straight and the floors were not level. For a photographer who insists on proper alignment and perspective, attempting to get my image “lined up” was somewhat frustrating. I actually tried a half dozen camera levels and finally concluded that it wasn’t me ! So, if some of the walls in the photographs appear to be crooked, it is because they were! Photographing with available light resulted in having to over-expose the images to maintain sufficient shadow detail. In some cases, this resulted in hot spots in the highlights. Digital media still does not have the exposure latitude that traditional silver halide film does.

The photographs in this collection will be permanently housed in the Ramsey Historical Society. Additionally, a master digital archive of the original images will be stored in electronic media at “The Old Stone House” for use for by the citizens of Ramsey.

About the Photographer

Edward L. Linde II is a fine art black & white photographer who specializes in documenting the changing social and visual landscape of America. Ed works in the tradition of photographers such as David Plowden, Walker Evans, Edward Weston and others. He practices straight photography which means that he pre-visualizes and composes the final image before an exposure is made. This school of photography focuses on solid technical execution in addition to artistic expression. Ed has practiced photography since he was fourteen and until recently worked exclusively in a traditional darkroom. He switched to digital media using Nikon cameras because of time considerations. Both his children attended Dater School. Ed conceived this project to leave a legacy of Dater images for his children and the other children in Ramsey.