

Welcome to Paxton Town Hall

1. It was originally located in the basement of the Congregational Church over 200 years ago
2. Every town needs rules and laws to help it be governed

2. In 1888 (over 100 years ago) – Simon Allen left \$1500 to Paxton to build a town hall; resident Ledyard Bill gave land to build it on to the town. That is why this is called Allen hall.

3. Through the years, the town hall also contained:

a) the Paxton Public Library (located in the area now used for two restrooms on the 1st floor) . There were not many books although wealthy local residents donated some collections since books were quite expensive.

This meant that children and grownups could only take out one book at a time and had to return it before another one could be taken.

b) school – the White Building was being built the year after the town hall opened so children went to school in here until it was done.

c) church – for a few years before St. Columba was built in the 1950s, Catholic Mass was celebrated on Sunday mornings here; religious education classes were also held here.

d) jail – in the basement you'll be shown the tramp room that the town would use as a lockup for drunks or as needed

e) the fire department stored all their equipment in the basement too along with a fire wagon. When the church bell rang men would come with a team of horses and attach the wagon to go fight the fire

4. The most important use of the town hall was for making rules and planning for the needs of the town at an important town meeting. Do any of your parents go to TM? Now they only go at night for an hour or so, but a long time ago a town meeting would last all day. Everyone would come early in the day with a box lunch and the TM would last for many hours. Most of the people in town had farms, so sometimes they would milk their cows and bring large containers of milk that they would leave downstairs until a wagon would come and take them to Worcester to sell. If you look at the balcony in the back you can see where the teachers would bring the children from school so they could watch to see what a tm was. Sometimes people would get very excited or even angry during the meeting and when they asked the children whether they understood what was happening, they'd say they remembered most just seeing everyone get angry and yell. After the town meeting, everyone would go home to do their chores and then come back and there would be a big dinner the ladies in town would cook and then a big dance.

5. There were many parties and fun events in the town hall. Every Christmas, all the children from baby to 14 years old came to up here. A tall tree would be decorated in the center that rose high up to the ceiling. There would be songs and when they sang jingle bells in would come Santa Claus with a gift and candy for each child. They even got something really special..... an orange. Every February there would also be a big town dance and one year it snowed so much that no one could go home until the horses pulled snow plows to plow the roads. The hall here was said to be 'bouncy' so everyone loved to dance here. There were many clubs that meet here and this building was very full of fun activities for young and old.

6. Let's talk for a minute about the building. It was built in the Victorian Stick Style a very short time so only a few buildings like it exist today;

- picture – sticks actually flat planks on top of clapboard to make design – look at the pattern on the front of the building; large simple stick truss beneath eaves; gable roof; simple corners and porches - side entrance same shed roof/front – very different).

- Here is the mystery – contrasting colors were used. What were the colors.....

We will give you a picture of the town hall and want you to color it in the colors you think it might have had.

Possible original color of Paxton Town Hall shortly after it was built in 1888. Determined to be a mustard color by paint analysis of original wooden window bracket scrapings under many layer so subsequent white paint.

