



## BYGONE DAYS

THE THOMAS HIBBARD HARDWARE CO.



Everything in the line of Hardware, Guns,  
Fishing Tackle, Etc.  
Horseheads, N. Y.

*Hibbard advertisement by Zim.*

The Hibbards opened a store in 1871 with a tinsmith and stove business located on S. Main Street in a two-story wooden building on the corner of John St. going back to Eleanor St. It was Dorn Dilmore's first barber shop. (Now it would be on the edge of the parking lot next to the Reporter office building). This was the beginning of a long era of business and service by the Hibbard family. Thomas Hibbard came to the area and worked for a tinsmith operator and eventually opened his own shop. He finally bought the building that has housed Hibbard's Hardware and a tinsmith shop about 1875.

By this time he had married and in time had Josephine who married Eddington, Thomas Ralph who married Ida Weller, Maude who married Clayton Judson and Mary who married Joseph Lynch. His wife was Elmira Beard, a relative of Zim's wife.

When the building was purchased the second floor was called Pritchard Hall because a man by the name of Pritchard from Corning had owned the building. The name remained. It was a very large hall over two stores with a wide stairway going up the west side. At the top of the stairs, over the ceiling was a balcony that held benches. At the

top of the stairs was a ticket booth and narrow stairs going to the balcony. There was a large cloak room at the far end facing one corner of the hall with windows on Franklin Street. There was a stage at the south end with windows facing the alley and two exit rooms on each end of the stage for entrance and exit and dressing, etc.

The ceiling wasn't very high. Maybe 10-12 feet with supporting posts at intervals. There were two basketball hoops attached to the east and west walls (they are still there).

The hall was used for political rallies, meetings, and speeches. Churches rented it for bazaars, dances and socials. Clubs also rented it for fund raising parties. Zim once decorated it for a big affair that was very elaborate. This was in the late 1800's. The hall was also used by the Horseheads High School after it began to have a basketball team. The school never had a gym until the 1928 school was built. I don't remember going to games there, but I do remember going to movies in the 20's when someone tried to show movies on Saturdays for awhile. My dad played basketball there with the school team in the early 1900's and then with the Keystones. The Keystones were a talented team which won many prizes in the state. I have a feeling it was sponsored by businesses and individuals. We have many pictures at the Museum of players that had to play in Pritchard Hall.

Even the girls' teams used it until the Presbyterian Church built their addition which included a basketball gym, bowling alley, balcony, kitchen and several rooms for classes. This was during the Depression and the Presbyterian ladies put on bazaars and dinners that were wonderful to help pay for the building. A lot of us kids wanted to change our church denomination. Some did, especially boys, and I didn't blame them. At that time the Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and



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Basketball – this is a sport that the Horseheads Area has always been partial to. It was not always school sponsored with a hired athletic person until after World War I. Before that teams were sponsored by donations of interested people and merchants. My dad played in the early 1900's with a team called the Crescents, and they used Pritchard Hall. I talked with Minor Jones and he played basketball for the school, probably in 1912 or 13. He said O.T. Butler was the principal and also coached. He remembers playing in Pritchard Hall and that there was a balcony along side near the stairs. He remembers they all played off the backboard (no dump shots).

He remembers going on the Pennsylvania Railroad, leaving Horseheads about 4:00 PM to play Athens. Orvil Butler, the coach and principal, went with them. There was Minor, Gib Eisenhart, LaMonte Breese, Ray Coleman and one more. He couldn't remember the fifth man. (There were never any subs.) They went to a hotel for dinner. He remembers dinner was thick slices of ham. They played the game, got on the train at 9:30 PM and came back to Horseheads.

In all the "Beacon" yearbooks, I can't find anything about sports in curriculum until 1919. That year there is mention of a man hired as a physical education teacher. There is much mentioned about Arbor Day sports between classes, track and field races; baseball games, and basketball on the playground. I remember as a little girl that on the "boy's side" there were two wooden basketball posts with iron hoops. Arbor Day was a day of interscholastic sports – bag races and potato races. I remember watching as a 7-year old, a race where the boys of the Junior and Senior Classes had suitcases full of women's clothes and they had to

put these on and race to a goal and back. Some say they had a banquet or dinner in the school for the winning class. A "Banner" was also bestowed on the class for the year.

Before the day was over a tree was planted on school property. Some of those big beautiful trees that are still on the block of the "old" school are products of classes planting them on Arbor Day. Arbor Day seemed to be a day that was very serious and special at Horseheads. It was a day we didn't have to go to formal class, although we attended the races and games.