

Becket Arts Center

Seminary Hall

7 Brooker Hill Road

42° 19'55.96"N 73° 04'57.27"W elevation 1201 feet

In Becket's first nine years, 1765-1774, "Dame Schools" were taught in homes. After 1774 public funds provided district schools, spread throughout the town; eventually reaching ten in number. The arrival of the railroad in the 1840's caused a population shift to [North Becket Village](#); making it the predominate school district. In 1855, the town voted to build **Seminary Hall**, the largest and most elaborate building, at a cost of nearly \$4,000. The District #9 Village School was held in the large 2 1/2-story Greek styled schoolhouse, with a social hall on the second floor and distinctive bell tower. It was in use until January 1940 after the remaining little district schools were closed, and the [Becket Consolidated School](#) was opened on the site of the former Claflin House.

In the aftermath of the 1927 Flood, **Seminary Hall** was the command post for the recovery efforts for the devastated [North Becket Village](#).

Subsequently it was used as a meeting place for the Grange and the American Legion. From about 1926 to 1944, the Grange No. 47, met at **Seminary Hall** twice a month, on the second-floor hall. The Grange was the focal point of community activities, putting on plays, minstrel shows, and well attended suppers. The suppers took place in the basement.

The American Legion met at **Seminary Hall** from 1946 to 1975. The McSweeney Gage Runz Post No. 329 was named to honor the three men from Becket who lost their lives in World War II. The basement was used for a shooting range during this time. After 1975 the monthly meetings of the American Legion continued to be held in the building as provided for in the town lease to the Becket Arts Center of the Hilltowns.

In May 1976 the town voted to lease the building to the **Becket Arts Center**, a non-profit organization, for a term of 20 years, with an annual fee of \$1.00. Their mission is to offer diverse arts and cultural experiences that inspire, entertain, educate and enrich our community. The **BAC** promotes participation in the arts including visual arts, music, literature, sculpture, drama, crafts, quilting, painting, drawing, dance, writing and allied interests in the community.



The Becket Historical Commission developed an educational slideshow highlighting the early history of Becket to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Arts Center in 2020:

<https://www.becketartscenter.org/history>



For further information email the Becket Historical Commission:

historical@townofbecket.org