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CORINTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

One of the oldest and most interesting schools in Elgin County is S. S. 16 in the Township of Bayham. At present the school is situated $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles south of the village on lot 6, concession 9. There is probably no school in the country in which the people take so much interest and in whose history they are more proud. This is especially true of many of the older members of the section of whom it may be said that this school has been their Alma Mater--their university, their only college--the institution in which their schooling began and ended. But their education thus begun did not end there.

Previous to the year 1862 there had been other schools serving the district. One was on the corner of the farm now owned by Murray Firby. The other one at Jones Corners later had its name changed to Corinth. Part of the Jones Corner school formed the back part of the Donaldson house which stood just south of the Wabash tracks on the east side. This house stood there until the early 1930's.

About 1862 the Union School Section was formed, the site chosen, and the school built which was known for many years as the White School House. Of course, we know it is now serving a great purpose as a Women's Institute Hall. As a school at first it was one-roomed and had fewer windows than it has today. The first teacher was a Mr. Edward Moore. He attended the re-union at the 60th anniversary in 1922 and gave a very interesting address. This building did service for 65 years. During that time, many pupils learned their "3 R's" and afterward pursued various branches of work. At one time the attendance was 150 pupils with one teacher in one room. Imagine, if you can, 150 pupils writing on slates at one time. Would any one of you envy the teacher of that time? Water bottles and slate cloths were the common thing in those times and if the bottle were empty the rule was to spit on the slates and rub it off with the sleeve. Imagine!

Later the room was divided into two rooms and more windows put in. The school yard at this time was a clear space with woods on two sides.

Mr. Amoss was principal when this picture was taken and Miss Sarah Baker, the assistant. Mr. Amoss taught continuously for 33 years. He supervised the planting of the trees which now make the school grounds the beautiful park it is today. Each student was given a tree to plant and that tree was given the name of the student.

The new school was built in 1927 and many pupils have graduated from it during that time. I am sure it is a credit to the community which it serves.

In the corner stone which was laid in May, 1927, there is a glass jar containing names and pictures of the trustee board of 1927, teachers and pupils. There are coins and a newspaper also in the jar. Each pupil laid a brick when the corner stone was laid.

When the present building was completed Rev. Jos. Hibbert, a former pupil, who has since passed away, gave an inspiring address at the dedication service.

One very interesting part of the programme at this dedication service was the marching of the 105 pupils from the old to the new school.

A list of the teachers' names who taught from August 1862, in their respective order are:

Edward Moore
William V. Huntsman
Warren M. Lyons
A. H. Brown
N. Stilwell
Darius Dean
A. M. Springer

Miss S. Springer, sister of A. M. Springer who was engaged as assistant teacher

D. J. Donahue who afterward resigned to study law. He was called to the Bar and followed the profession in St. Thomas, later appointed Crown Attorney for Elgin County, then County Judge of Renfrew.

Then succeeded a man whose name is so associated with the Corinth School as to be almost synonymous with it. James Amoss who was principal of the school for 33 successive years from 1877 until 1910, when failing health compelled him to retire, having accomplished a work of usefulness that must remain unmeasured. Many men and women high in professional and business life can attest the excellence of his teaching.

It is said that in 1877 Mr. Amoss entered a bare school building centred in a barren unsightly lot. In 1910 he left it bedded with flowers, groved with evergreens and surrounded by rows of maples. This is considered a model school yard of Elgin County.

Succeeding the late James Amoss were Mr. Robertson, David Knight, Miss Myrtle Bole, Miss Small, Miss Blakestone and Miss Erie Amoss, who was the daughter of the late James Amoss. The assistant teachers in the old white school were Miss Taylor, Miss Larksworthy, Miss Hankinson, Olive Bancroft, Sara Baker, Violet Curtis, Violet Hockey, Daisy Caven, Emma Ford, Ella Mills, May Ferguson, Alberta Dean, Beatrice Barber, Minnie Evans, Enoch Brown, Hazel Caron, Maud Cooper, Myrtle Robson, Miss Thorne, Hazel Small, Freda Leathorn, H.M. Brenchley, Vera Buttery, Susie High, Ninnie Fraser, John Martin, Lula Lane, May Leathorn and Kay Dygart. Miss Amoss was principal in the new school until 1932.

The new school was officially opened on Friday afternoon October 27, 1927. When the bell was officially rung for the first time by the Principal, Miss Erie Amoss, a long line of pupils formed, connecting the new school with the old. Stephen Scott of Tillsonburg, the contractor, presented the keys of the new school to the trustees. Spencer Cook, on behalf of the old boys' reunion committee, of which he was president, presented to the school

two hundred chairs for use in the auditorium.

The pupils of the old school of Union S. S. 16 Bayham and 24 Malahide have taken up all kinds of work; teachers, preachers, nurses, bankers, accountants, farmers, engineering, railroading, to say nothing of those who became good housewives the country over. For example--Clinton Ford - ex-city Solicitor of Calgary, Alberta and later the Judge of the Supreme Court of Alberta. James Hibbert became President of London Conference of the United Church. Morley McKennie -- First head of the Provincial Savings Bank. Colin Brown - Accountant; Harry Amoss - Inspector for Auxiliary Classes in the Province of Ontario.



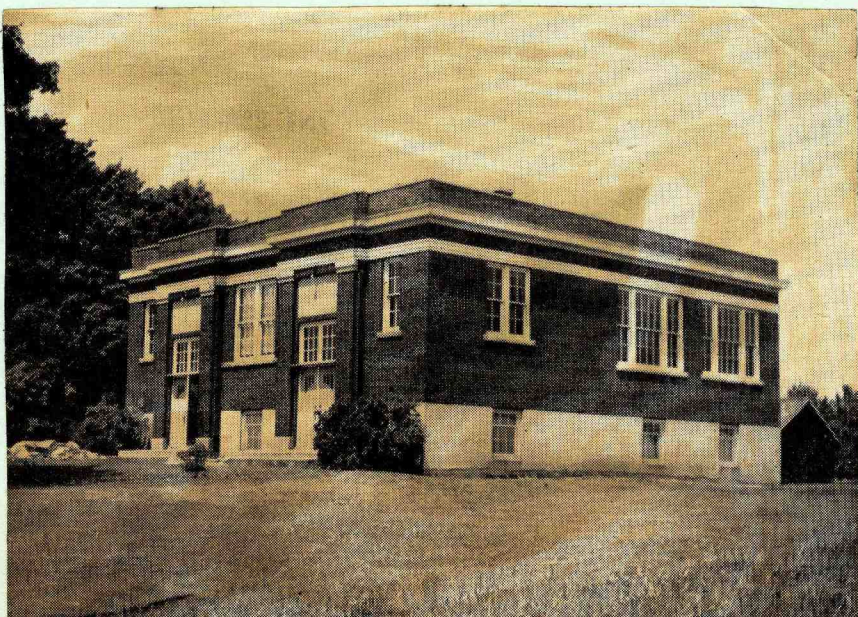
1890
James Amoss, Teacher

The school built in 1927 continued to serve the community with little change until 1953. Opening day in September 1953 brought more pupils to school than could be accommodated in the two rooms. There was not time to build then so the trustees were given permission to make necessary alterations in the basement and make a third room for the school. There were twenty pupils put in the room and Mrs. Ruth Newland was hired as the third teacher. The basement room was in operation until the fall of 1960. During the summer of 1960 a room was built on the east side of the other school and a new furnace room was built and an oil burning furnace was installed. The new addition was built by a local man, Archie Vermeersch. When the room was opened, there were twenty-seven pupils in it.



1913
Pictures Donated by Mrs. A. Silverthorne

The room was officially opened in the fall of 1960. A short programme was presented by the pupils of the school. The guest speaker was Dr. Harry Amoss who had attended school in the Corinth area in the early days of his education. He presented several books to the school library, some which he had written. A presentation was made of three new clocks by Emmerson Beemer on behalf of the family in remembrance of the late Cecil Beemer who was a member of the school board for eighteen years.



Two room School Built in 1927



Room Added 1960
Picture Donated by Mrs. D. Falkins

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CORINTH PUBLIC SCHOOL OBSERVES DIAMOND JUBILEE

The Corinth Public School was established in 1862. It entered into the hearts and minds of some of the progressive people of the community to celebrate the school's diamond jubilee. A meeting was held on April 25, 1922 to consider this matter. The date for the reunion was set for August 2, 1922.

The committee named for this event as well as many other citizens of the community spent many hours of planning and work and were rewarded by having approximately 2000 in attendance at the reunion.

To get in touch with all surviving teachers and pupils of the school was not easy. Committees were formed for each decade, for example, Mr. Ford who had attended the school in 1862, headed the committee for the term 1862-1872, and found the names and addresses of each student and teacher of that term. Similar committees were formed for the other decades. People from a distance were given billets in homes of the community.

The reunion date arrived and so did the rain. Showers began at 2 o'clock and continued until night. The programme of sports and amusements and platform programme were not carried on entirely as planned. The sports and amusements were of minor importance and quite secondary to the renewed friendships, the handshakes and hearty greetings of old friends. Many had been separated for decades and this was the real purpose of the reunion. Those assembled came from many parts of Ontario, some from towns and cities of the United States, as well as from the Canadian west. Harvey G. Hughes of Buffalo New York, had been away from the district for 53 years. Hamilton M. Robertson and wife of Niagara Falls Ontario had been absent 51 years and Mrs. Johnson (Margaret Howell) of Sprucedale Muskoka returned after an absence of 45 years. They had the pleasure of renewing acquaintances not only with those residents of the section but with hundreds of others who had returned after a similar length of absence.

The most interesting character at the gathering was Mr. Edward Moore of Frome who at that time was in his 84th year. He was the first teacher of the Corinth Public School. Mr. Moore taught from August 1862 until the end of the year. He was a native of Bayham. He was popular with the pupils but he was a man who loved outdoor life and he returned to continue life as a farmer on his farm. At the reunion the old schoolmaster received many handshakes and many expressions of congratulations. Some of Mr. Moore's students who were present at the reunion were Mrs. John Veitch, Corinth, 83 yrs., Mrs. Peter Vincent, 73 yrs., Mrs. Johnson (Margaret Howell) Parry Sound; Frank Ellsworth, Straffordville; William Ford and many others.

Ralph M. Dowson and wife of Rainy River, Ontario, whose ages were 81 and 80 respectively were the oldest married couple to return from a distance.

"I know your face but--" was an expression frequently heard at the reunion and some of the visitors had much amusement in having their former friends try to identify them.

Between showers attempts were made to carry out the programme. Charles Denton, of Tillsonburg, a former student at the school, presided. The first person called on for an address was Edward Moore. He was followed by others, namely T. Hammond, Rev. John Wills, W. Ford, T. Merritt Moore and Lorenzo Howell and J.C. Smith, I.P.S.

The Aylmer orchestra was present, piano solo was given by Mrs. Reid of St. Thomas and Miss Cascadden delighted all by dancing the Highland Fling in costume, to music of the bagpipes.

A ball game was played early in the afternoon between the Tuxis boys and the Corinth Seniors, Tuxis boys winning 7 to 5.

Local visitors and friends lunched on the grounds in picnic style, but there were refreshment booths on the grounds where the best of home cookery could be had at very moderate prices.

Everything was very complete, giving evidence of most efficient committee work. The rain dampened all except the ardour and fellow feeling of those present. Miss Erie Amoss, on the day of reunion had an alphabetical register and took the autographs and addresses of hundreds of the guests.

In numbers, in fellowship and in spirit of reunion and renewed friendships, this was a great success and will be an event never to be forgotten by those who were in attendance.



Edna Vincent Reg Stewart Douglas Rabbetts
Donated by Douglas Rabbetts

A heavy afternoon rain failed to dampen the spirits of more than 900 former Corinth Public School pupils and teachers who turned out Monday, August 6, 1962 for the school's centennial reunion.

The hard-working centennial committee, headed by president Douglas Rabbetts, was on hand early in the morning to greet the visitors who continued to pour in all day from such widely separated points as Atlanta, Mo. and Cabri, Sask.

The committee arranged a happy, but uncrowded program which officially opened at 1:30 p.m. when a ribbon was cut by Mr. Rabbetts. A beautiful centennial cake, made by Mrs. Leo Pressey and Miss Barbara Holtby, and decorated by Mrs. Alida Hansford, was cut by the latter. Later the cake was auctioned off and taken by Clarence Dadson of London, an ex-pupil.

The major part of the day was left open to give former pupils and teachers a chance to renew old acquaintances.

In the evening, a formal program was enjoyed following a service of dedication conducted by Rev. C. C. Strachan, of Richmond, assisted by Rev. J. N. Gould, of Aylmer. The gathering was welcomed by Mrs. Edna Vincent, in charge of the program. Bev Rabbetts led in a solo of dedication.

A number of former teachers were given

an opportunity to talk briefly about the "old days" during the program which also featured a variety of musical and dance numbers. Among former teachers to speak were Mrs. Abe Baer, Arnott Goodwin, Mrs. George Marshall, Robert Gilbert, Richard Gregson and Mrs. Lois Godby.

James A. McBain, M.P. for Elgin, Ronald K. McNeil, M.P.P. for Elgin, Elgin warden Charles Phillips and Weston Holtby, chairman of the school board, also spoke briefly.

The program concluded with a square dance exhibition by East Elgin Junior Farmers including Jackie Walker, Jim Dunning, Barbara Holtby, Dave Gobel, Eleanor Stover, Jim Pigram, Margaret Howe and Ralph Cornish. Caller was Wm. Walker. A dance in the school basement wound up the successful event.

A program of sports for the young people, to have taken place in the afternoon, was literally washed out as was a band concert slated for 3:30 p.m. Ladies of the Corinth United Church Women served meals in the basement during the day.

A special feature of the reunion was a fine collection of old and not so old class pictures which proved of special interest to the visitors. Plates, carrying pictures of the old and present school buildings, were purchased by many.