

but they were not counted pupils as the day of higher education for women had not dawned and it was by great kindness that they were permitted two or three times a week to recite to the master the lessons they had prepared and to have new lessons assigned.

"In that old schoolroom was taught work preparatory to University studies, chiefly, Latin, Greek and French, together with the higher branches of English. The young men, for they were nearly all grown to manhood, sat on benches placed before desks that faced the wall. The centre of the room was vacant, and the master, walking up and down in the open space, watched the work of his pupils.

"In 1849 an agitation was set on foot to build a much needed schoolroom for the Grammar School pupils. In 1850 the building was completed and the Grammar School became one of the recognized institutions of the County of Middlesex, later of Elgin.

"In 1850 young women were admitted to full studentship. They were allowed to take their places in the school and to do the same work as their brothers.

"In 1862 the school building was considered unsuited for its purpose and the school board of that year set about building a new school.

The present school building was erected at a cost of \$3,550." 11

This building is still in existence but is vacant now.

The Township of Bayham was incorporated as a municipality in 1850. At the first council meeting of the newly incorporated township held January 21, 1850 at Sandytown (Straffordville), Simon Newcombe was appointed local Superintendent of Common Schools for the current year.

11. J. George Hodgins, The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario 1792-1910, pp. 4,5

Almost immediately the council began to concern itself with education. At the meeting of May 15, 1850 according to the Bayham Township Minute Book it was moved by Mr. Leonadus Burwell (fourth son of Mahlon Burwell) and seconded by Mr. Skinner as follows:

"That this Council, regarding the course of Popular Education as one of deep interest and importance, feel it incumbent on them to employ all lawful means in their power to elevate the character and increase usefulness of our Common Schools that in their opinions, these great objects are to be promoted by the general diffusion of knowledge on educational subjects, and by the introduction into our schools of an improved system of communicatory instruction and of school organization and discipline.

"That therefore, the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to obtain a copy of the Journal of Education for each School Section in the Township, for the use of the Trustees, Teacher, and the Section generally and that he be invited to attend the Teachers' Institute to be held at London on the 14 and 15 of June next, in order to enable him the better to introduce into our Common Schools, the principles of teaching and system of instruction adopted in the Normal School of this Province." 12

At this same meeting considerable school business was done. Motions were made "that the report on Scholl (sic) Sections No. 9 & 10, be adopted indicating that these two schools were in existence by 1850, that the money required to procure copies of the Journal of Education,



and attendance at the Teachers' Institute at London, be taken out of the funds in the hands of the Superintendent, (sic) amounting to 5..10, that the Inhabitants residing in the 9th and 10th concessions from the Townline Eastward to lot No. 2 be joined to School Section No. 3 commonly known as union Section." 13

During the meeting of April 7, 1851 Mr. Robert McNaughton was authorized to call the first school meeting of School Section No. 14, Straffordville. The village was known for a few months during that year between January 13, 1851 and December 23, 1851 as Lancaster and previous to that as Sandytown. The earliest school building stood on the hill some yards farther south than the present structure and across the road on the property now owned by Mr. Alex Bain. It seems this early building was destroyed by fire and school was held temporarily in part of a store on the south-east corner of the Pland Road and Erie Street.

A new school building was erected in 1868. It was a one room with three windows on either side having a bell and belfry. About 1897 the frame structure was brick-veneered. One former teacher, the late Richard McCurdy, was interviewed by

Mr. Preston Williams also a former teacher at Straffordville. Mr. McCurdy reported that the attendance was large during his regime, upwards of eighty on the roll during the winter, and on any good day, there would probably be sixty in attendance. A photograph taken in 1892 or 93 shows forty-eight pupils present.

At the same Council meeting, April 7, 1851, Mr. McNaughton was authorized "to call the first school meeting" 14 in Section 18 which presumably was the first in Eden proper. Mention has already been made to the log school-house on the farm of Mr. Samuel Howie on the Ridge Road a mile south and one half-mile east of the present village of Eden. It was on the south-west corner of the north hundred acres of lot number twenty-three, concession eight, Bayham. A little later this was replaced by a frame building a few feet from the site of the first building. At the time these buildings were in existence there was no village on the present site of Eden. A two-storey school was erected in 1876. For a long time only the downstairs room was used. About the year 1899 it again became a two room school the upper storey being used as a continuation school.

The Cash Account Book for S.S. No. 18, 1899 shows the following entries:

Sept. 11	Received legislative grant	\$51.50
Dec. 4	By cash from C.R. Garnham fees for son (my father) attending School in C. Class	1.00

14. Ibid., April 7, 1851.



Dec. 17	1 gal. Coal oil	\$ .20
	1 lamp burner	.10
Mar. 15	Alfred Meadows kindling rails	.75
Mar. 29	John Patton 5 boxes crayons, sealing wax	.65
Mar. 29	A.H. Nevills (sic) Teacher quarter salary	\$120.00
Mar. 29	Haitland McDowell 10 cords wood @ 90¢	9.00

Miss Catherine McDowell of Eden has a picture of Mr. & Mrs. James Dean. Mr. Dean was storekeeper and teacher in Eden in the 1880's. He whipped Camby Travis, who still lives in Eden, for chewing gum. Camby cried because the gum had cost him one cent and he "only had a cent every two or three years".

Another teacher in Eden was Mr. Nicholas Stilwell, whose daughter Mrs. Clarence Inman, Eden showed me her father's teaching certificate obtained in 1866, which reads as follows:

SECOND CLASS

GRADE A

This is to Certify that NICHOLAS STILLWELL (sic) of the PROTESTANT Faith having applied to the Board of Public Instruction for the County of Elgin, for a Certificate of Qualification, to teach a Common School, and having produced satisfactory proof of good moral character, the board has carefully examined HIM in the several branches of Study enumerated in the Qualifications of "Second Class Teachers", contained in the "Programme of the Examination and Classification of Teachers of Common Schools, Prescribed by the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada, adopted the 3rd day of October, 1850; and having found the said NICHOLAS STILLWELL well qualified to teach the several branches therein named, the board, as authorized by the 15th section of the Act, 13th and 14th Victoria, Chap. 48, hereby licences HIM to teach any Common School within the County.

THIS Certificate of Qualification, to remain in

force THREE YEARS.

Dated this 30th day of June 1866.

Mr. George Caulfield Chairman,  
Western Circuit.

E. Huppard Local Superintendent

Proficiency of the Candidate (one indicates highest  
and 9 lowest)

Reading	4	Arith.	3
Spelling	1	Geography	6
Writing	2	History	3
Neatness	2	Book Keeping	5
Grammar	3	School Organization	4

It would appear that Mr. Stilwell taught at Eden on two occasions for the date on the newspaper clipping bears the date January 8, 1875 and the date on the recommendation from the trustees is July 7, 1879.

Clipping from the London Herald, of January 8th, 1875.

Surprise and Presentation at Eden.

On the evening of the 23rd December, 1874, the pupils of the senior division of the Eden School waited on their teacher, Mr. N. Stilwell, at his residence, bearing baskets of refreshments for the evening. The amusements of the evening were music and dialogues by the pupils. At the close of the evening's exercises the pupils made Mrs. S. some valuable presents and Mr. Stilwell a present of a beautiful writing desk, accompanied by the following address, read by one of their number:

Dear Teacher, - Please accept this writing desk as a slight token of our esteem and affection for you. We feel that we are losing a kind and indulgent teacher, and valuable friend, from our school and neighborhood (sic). You are leaving many sad hearts behind you, and our earnest wish is that you may gain



many warm friends, and meet with great success in your new field of labour. We feel that as pupils we have not always been as obedient and respectful as we ought to have been; thereby causing you pain, but please forgive our youthful indiscretions and be assured we hold you in the highest esteem both as a teacher and friend. It is with the greatest reluctance we bid you good-bye, and when you are far from us we will remember you, and our hearts will yearn after the dear teacher with whom we now part. In conclusion, allow us most affectionately to bid you farewell.

On behalf of the pupils of Eden School,  
Courtland Grey, Wilson Smith.

In thanking them for their beautiful presents Mr. S. made some touching and appropriate remarks, wishing them every prosperity at school. After singing a beautiful farewell song the pupils retired. Mr. Stilwell goes to London, where he assumes the position of Professor of penmanship at the London Commercial College, a position for which no man in the Province is better qualified. He takes with him the earnest wishes of all his acquaintances for his success.

Read & Presented at a Public Examination.  
Eden, Ont., July 7th, 1879.

To N. Stilwell, Teacher:

We, the undersigned, having been Trustees of School Section No. 18 Bayham, during the years 1872, '73 and '74, and also from 1876 to 1879, heartily testify to the efficient manner in which you have conducted the school during the term of about five and a half years in which you have occupied the position of head master. During that time the school has been raised to a higher standard than it ever before reached. Your pupils are practical and well versed in the subjects they have studied, and have been remarkably successful as candidates at High School entrance and teachers' examinations. You have maintained excellent order and discipline in the school, and with few exceptions without resort to corporal punishment. Your assiduous care of the school-house and premises deserves special mention. Lastly but not least, we have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the exemplary moral and Christian example you have set

before the young people of the community. As every rose has its thorn, so we find our very pleasant connection with you as teacher must terminate, as you have seen fit to resign your position for the purpose of climbing the ladder of fame to higher eminence; but be assured you will carry with you the well wishes and kind regards of those with whom you have so successfully labored (sic).

This testimonial bore the signatures of nine prominent members of the community.

Mr. Stilwell also taught at S.S. No. 16, Corinth. The following letter from the trustees testifies to his success there.

Corinth Dec. 19, 1871

We, the undersigned trustees and ex-trustees of School Section 16, Bayham, do render our sincere thanks to Mr. N. Stilwell for the very efficient manner in which he has conducted our school for the term of three years and five months. We would also certify that he is of good morals and strictly temperate habits, and we feel justifiable in recommending him to any board of trustees as an excellent teacher.

J.W. Dennis  
C. Pearson,  
H. Berry,  
Geo. A. Doan,  
Elisha Anger,  
Haggai Cook.

SEAL

Another notable teacher of Corinth School was Mr. James Amoss who was principal of the one room school for thirty-four years from 1877 to 1910.

South of Corinth and <sup>SOUTH</sup>WEST of Eden was a school known as Maple Grove, S.S. No. 17. The first school was built about forty rods west of the most recent school. The first teacher was a Mr. Edward Moore. The second school, also a frame building with



wooden benches, was built about 1860 by a Mr. Murray. The last school, made of red brick was built in 1875. Mr. Joseph Hatch drew the brick from a brickyard in Vienna. The seats were at first double seats, but these were later replaced by single ones.

A school bearing a similar name to Maple Grove School was the Maple Leaf School or S.S. No. 10. It was better known as the Owl Cage. Permission was granted by the township council December 1851 for Mr. John Claus to call the first meeting. However the earliest record that I could find was that in 1875 there was a frame school house built on the fourth concession of Bayham between the townline and the side road on the south side of the road and about a half mile from the side road. It was then torn down in 1880 and built on the west side of the side road between the fourth and fifth concessions of Bayham, on Henry Palmer's place. There were some double desks, a few benches a blackboard and a hand bell. After a number of years Mr. John Haney bought the school and built Mr. David Soper's house. The old school was replaced by a white brick school in 1890 about a half a mile north on the same side road. Several maple trees were planted around the yard and it became known as the Maple Leaf School.

The last school, with which I wish to deal is S.S. No. 8 known locally as the Griffins School. According to an account written in the brown general register by a teacher this school

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has been in continuance since 1840. John Nelles received a grant of land from the Government of Upper Canada amounting to two hundred acres and from this he gave the site of the present school buildings and front yard. Shortly after this, the school was built and was used for public school, Sabbath school and Divine worship.

In 1896 the old building burned down and a new one had to be built. It was made twelve feet shorter than the original building since the attendance had decreased from seventy-five to fifty pupils. The bricks for the new school were bought from the Light brickyard near Aylmer by George Godby and the new building was built by the late Thomas Brady. The buildings, old and new, were used for Sabbath school for almost seventy-five years.

An interesting story is told of the bell. It was purchased from an American firm of bell makers at a reduction of thirty per cent on account of its being used for Divine worship and Sabbath school. While it was in the yard prior to being placed in the belfry Mr. and Mrs. George Godby took hold of the bar and rung the bell swinging it out in their arms although it weighed five hundred and twenty pounds including the bar. This was considered a feat of strength even in those days of August 1884.

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