

1968 REUNION OF S.S. No. 12

YARMOUTH

by: Mrs. Edward Willson

I want you all to think back and remember one person, other than your parents, who more than anybody else influenced you in your formative years from 6 to 16. Many of you reaching back in your memory would pick a certain teacher whom you would remember as being very special. Teachers are really substitute parents. Many things which our parents couldn't teach us or were too busy to teach us, were taught to us by a kind and loving teacher who know how to praise us and discipline us at the same time.

I have no way of knowing how many pairs of feet have traipsed up and down the steps of the S.S. No. 12 school, but, there were quite a few.

People say "Isn't it a shame the school is closed?"---It will never be closed, because the children who learned, struggled, had fun and found out what life was all about there, are situated all over this area, actively making this a better world and still using what they learned at S. S. No. 12. The school will exist as long as these people exist.

Since I was the instigator of this reunion, I felt there should be some kind of program, to celebrate not the closing of the school, but rather to say to everyone in the area and the world in general "This is what our school meant to us."

Well, how do you go about planning such a gathering? You have no idea how many people will come. We couldn't plan a very formal program because what if it rained--and what if it did rain? What would we do then? I say "we" because Jeanette Walters was my right hand man--or lady--I should say. The rain wasn't much of a problem. We would set one alternate date and if it rained on both days we just wouldn't be able to have the reunion at all.

As far as informing people of the event, that was no problem for me because I didn't know many of the older people who had gone to the school so Alma Flintoft took over in that department with the able assistance of Bessie Cook. Together they were able to get in touch with many of the people who had gone to school. Bessie was instrumental in getting in touch with many of the former teachers of whom we had the picnic. (There is a group picture of them all with the exception of Mrs. Hazel Trickett who had to leave before the splendid picture was taken.) See the group picture following the write up.

Setting a date was the hardest thing. We set two dates and had to change them because of family picnics which involved members of the community. So we set a third day and said "This is it. It doesn't matter what happens we're not changing it again."

Lunch was another problem altogether.....  
We had no way of knowing how many people were

coming. There might be 20 or 200. So the only way we could be sure of having enough was to have everybody bring their own picnic lunch, complete. Well, that was fine except some wanted to eat their own and others decided they wanted to put it all together. I myself thought the latter would be nice. I announced this after we were all gathered and there were some disappointed looks and some said, "Oh I thought we were going to eat our own." So I said "OK." Then someone else said, "Oh let's put it altogether," so we did, finally.

The program wasn't difficult to arrange because it was kept simple. We had the history of the school read by Gowan Young. Gifts were given for the oldest teacher Miss Myrtle Paddon, and for Mrs. William Matthews and Charles Ryckman who were the earliest pupils attending the school, and present at the reunion. The teacher who came the furthest was Mrs. Hazel Trickett and the pupil who came the furthest was Ruth O'Connor (Mrs. Agar) from Alberta--who happened to be visiting in the area. We also presented a gift to Stan Cook, for his continued and loyal support and interest in our school.

All the teachers were asked to give a few reminiscences.

We had many assurances that this day, on June 21, 1968, would long be remembered. It was a pleasure acting as "Master of Ceremonies" because there was splendid co-operation from every one present.



## SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF S.S. #12 YARMOUTH

Prepared by: Bessie Dancey, Walters, Cook

The raindrops could be heard pitter--patter-  
ing on the window panes as I donned my nice new  
red raincoat and started out early the first day  
of school in September, 1924. Boarding with Pearl  
and Charlie Ryckman I was just a short distance  
from the school so outwardly calm but inwardly  
trembling I proudly walked up to my first School,  
S.S. #12, Yarmouth, determined to earn every penny  
of my salary--\$875. The building in front of me  
looked so impressive and inviting even in a grey  
morning.

I was launching out on a new career and needed  
the co-operation of all the eager little children  
who peered out from the entryways. After a cheery  
greeting they followed me into the schoolroom.  
When the bell rang at 9:00 a.m. there was a hushed  
silence for had I not placed the regulation strap  
carefully on the desk? A short "pep" talk followed  
and then the day started in earnest. There never  
was a discipline problem and I thoroughly enjoyed  
every minute I spent within the walls of that little  
red schoolhouse.

Billy Edmonds was my "handy-man" who always  
thrust the large blocks of wood into the furnace  
with a willing smile. He saw to it that we were  
always warm and comfortable.

The first Christmas concert was held in the  
afternoon when my mother and father came up to give  
me moral support as did the other mothers and fathers

in the community. When my mother arrived a little late--because of the snowdrifts--I snatched off her fur coat for my Santa Claus drill. Billy Edmonds wore it as the leader. With his Santa face and a pillow or two he played the role well.

The following year, 1925, I was re-engaged as teacher with an increase in salary--\$1,000. That year I held my Christmas concert in the evening. To a packed house the children rendered their songs, dialogues, etc. The party was brought to a close after the young people of the community presented their play, "Patty's Mistake", a hilarious comedy. Practicing had been fun and our efforts were well rewarded. Jingling bells ushered in Santa in the person of Charlie Ryckman. I had told him not to let the children recognize his voice--so Charlie never said a word!

Our pride and joy was the school garden in the "V" in front of the school. In it we planted vegetables and flowers and met several times during the summer holidays to hoe and weed it. Hollyhocks were planted on the four sides of the school in 1925 and continued to bloom through the years.

All the lively little gifts given to me as loving tributes on my birthday, at Christmas and in parting in June 1925 I will always treasure. Some of my former pupils became my neighbours for I liked the school section so much I decided to remain in it the rest of my life.

Thank-you S.S. #12, Yarmouth!

MISS MYRTLE PADDON

REMINISCES AT SCHOOL REUNION

Well, it was the third Monday of August, 1910, that I came to No. 12 so full of enthusiasm and new ideas that I was ready to blow the top off the whole primary educational system of Ontario, and there I was unexperienced but with the choicest material at hand to work with, six little Youngs, four Walters, three Tansleys, two Wadlands and such other ingredients as Mills, Parker, Russ, M<sup>C</sup>Lean, Maynard, Zavitz, Somerville, and perhaps a few others to make up a most interesting assortment of about twenty-five. Such a friendly reception as I got, every one freshly scrubbed, groomed, eyes wide open and assessting me to decide if I'd do, and I thought I was accepted, on trial at least, when Gladys Wadland gave me a luscious, juicy, harvest apple which I still remember.

It was the hottest day that I ever put in and as I trudged up the road at 4:00 o'clock to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robb Mills I was pretty well wilted, but, there was Mrs. Mills, with her starched white apron, holding the screen door wide open regardless of flies, with that welcome that I will always remember and a pitcher of tangy, cold lemonade ready to pour and such a "home away from home" as I enjoyed for the next three years.

The school was kept warm in winter and beautifully clean and dusted thanks to the Walters family's untiring efforts, and my trustees, Mr. R. B. Mills Jas. Young and W. T. Wadland, all of whom have passed



on were so kind to me and showed their appreciation of my humble efforts by raising my salary, (which by the way had started at \$450) each year. The peak of achievement that first year was reached when my Entrance Candidates, Gertie Young and Vivian Zavitz passed with excellent marks.

In the following years other families moved into the section and younger children started and the M<sup>C</sup>Credies and Edmonds children, Freddie Hawkins and Harley M<sup>C</sup>Callum added spice to the school life. I still remember some very interesting and embarrassing moments.

Today it is with mixed feelings that I enjoy this lovely reunion, for with it somehow, I bid farewell to dear old No. 12.



S.S. #12, Yarmouth School - known as  
"Johnstown" School. White brick-built  
1907, Lot 15, Concession 7, S.W. corner.  
Burned in 1915 and was replaced by a red  
brick school.



## "SCHOOL DAZE "

### Early Education in St. Thomas

There isn't anyone here tonight that doesn't entertain some fond memories of when they were school girls. It may be of an adored teacher, special occasion, a poem learned in grade three or what ever, but we do look back at the good old days when we were young ----- not so long ago for some of you but an eternity for others.

There have always been teachers and students, some who wanted to learn and others who were pushed into it but in the early 1800's, 1824 to be exact when St. Thomas was first laid out as a village children whose parents wanted them to learn the 3R's did so under the stern guidance of the encumbant rector of the Anglican Church, namely Alexander Mackintosh, and later Rev. Mark Burnham. The parents paid him a fee to do so. Before 1830 a school was opened in an upper room of the building where the court of the King's Bench was located by Mr. Stephen Randal.

By 1850 there were two schools at the corner of Stanley St. ( Port Stanley Street as it was known then ) and Walnut. On the South side of Walnut Street right at the corner was the Talbot Seminary or better known as the Common School, a two storey frame building housing the elementary classes. Directly South of it was the County Grammar School, a one storey frame school house which provided a classical education preparing students to enter university.

The village of St. Thomas in five years, 1850 - 1855, doubled in population so the Common school bulged at the seams and it was evident that more commodious accommodations were vital. Dr. Southwick, Mr James Mitchell and Mr Wm. Joshua White had just purchased the Davis farm and wanted to subdivide it. (That was the present part of the city from Center Street to Eliza which is now Rosebery and Elgin to Railway which is now Princess Ave. or thereabouts.) The village school trustees purchased the East half of the present Wellington School property for 100 pounds. For the same sum the West half was bought from Benj. Drake. The wives of these gentleman gave up their dower rights to this small plot and in return streets were named for them, Elizabeth St., Isobel