

CONTINUATION SCHOOL AT SPARTA

For some years there has been agitation in South Yarmouth for a Continuation School, the need being felt by ratepayers, who wanted to give their children at least some years at high school work and who either could not afford to send them to St. Thomas or felt that this city was too far away.

G. K. Mills, Continuation School Inspector, accompanied Inspector Smith to South Yarmouth and addressed the ratepayers, and, as a result, S.S.4(Barnams'), S.S.6(Chestnut Grove), S.S.7(Sparta), and S.S.13(Coles'), have made an agreement, which has been ratified by the Department of Education, to form a Continuation School district to be known as the Sparta Continuation School.

These school sections united for this purpose will be responsible for engaging teachers and providing equipment.

Continuation School classes were held in one half of the Friends' Meeting House from September 1923 until December 1927 - and classes commenced in the new school building in January 1928, with two teachers conducting classes.

The gymnasium has been a well patronized Community Hall for evening entertainment and meetings.

TEACHER AND PUPILS IN 1923

Miss Ona Setterington
Gertrude Oille
Leta Harvey
Bertha Mitchell
Joe Gooding
Arthur Smale
Roy Harvey
Noble Haight
Tom Roberts

Ruby Haight
Elsie Small
Etta Roberts
Audra Nichols
Ruth Greer
Beth Weir
Jean Stanley
Marjory Corvett

JAMESTOWN

"In 1835 James Chrysler, a wealthy merchant of St. Thomas, conceived the idea of establishing a business and a village in this locality. His choice of a site would, at that early date when railroads were a thing unknown and unthought of, have seemed a very wise one, convenient to a port, surrounded by scenery of no ordinary beauty, and drained by a stream which afforded ample motive power for running the machinery. He proceeded immediately to erect the first distillery, then in quick succession a saw mill, a grist mill and a warehouse. Many laborers were required in these various establishments. Mr. Chrysler's lot was divided into smaller lots and very soon a flourishing little village, named Jamestown in honor of its founder, nestled among the hills. Farmers in the surrounding country found a ready sale for their corn, wheat and timber. Scows built in Jamestown by Henry Carter plied up and down the Catfish Creek, carrying cargoes of flour, lumber and whiskey to Port Bruce, where they were put on board lake vessels and taken to Buffalo. The Catfish Creek was first known as River a la Barbue and later as Barlow or Orwell River. The village was granted a Post Office. A general store was opened by Mr. Chrysler and a blacksmith shop by John Oille, who was also a wagon maker. The first and only schoolhouse of which the town could boast was a log edifice built in 1841 but all records of the teachers and trustees of this school seem to have been lost.

After some years Mr. Chrysler sold his property to Mr. James Cotton - Business grew less and the property changed hands frequently. The dam was known as the "Tumbling Dam" and was always greatly injured by the freshets. In 1855 the property was valued at \$24,000 and John Hilliard Cameron, the well known lawyer who was then treasurer of the Church of England funds for Ontario, advanced a mortgage on it for \$18,000 church money. About the same time Sheriff Monroe advanced a second mortgage for \$3,000. Finally the property fell into the hands of Mr. Wm. Ballah, an Englishman, who in a short time became bankrupt. Then the land was rented and rapidly decreased in value until in 1864 Mr. Thos. Pineo bought the entire property for \$2,400 - later coming to Geo. Pineo.

A Jamestown resident, Charles Freeman, better known as the Canadian giant, was noted for his strength and activity. He was able to lift 3,200 pounds, and at one time, on a test of his strength, he bound and threw a horse ten feet." (Miss H. Robinson's Diary)

In the fall of 1892 a serious disaster occurred in the Jamestown valley. Late one evening Mr. Wm. Ashton was crossing, with his threshing machine engine, the old wooden bridge which then spanned the Catfish, when suddenly the beams gave way, and the horses, engine and driver were precipitated a distance of 20 feet into the stream below. One of the horses was killed and the engine

JAMESTOWN (Cont'd.)

fell on Mr. Ashton injuring him so severely that for weeks his life was despaired of, but in the end medical skill triumphed and he slowly recovered. A new wooden bridge has since been built at a cost of \$1,640.

A sailor working on the new iron bridge building over Kettle Creek had his hat blown off his head by the wind and while endeavoring to catch it lost his hold on the timbers and fell. After falling about 15 feet he grabbed another timber and climbed up to his former position and proceeded with his work as unconcernedly as if nothing unusual had happened. No one but a sailor could have performed this feat.

Mr. Levi Young of Port Bruce had in his possession a "Set of Books" used at Jamestown in 1853-4. They are kept in double entry system with day book, journal and ledger and in English currency which was then in use.

"It may be interesting to know the prices of some of the staple articles of trade that prevailed at that time. These are changed into Canadian currency:

Lumber, common	\$ 6.00 per M.
Lumber, clear	\$16.00 per M.
Wheat	\$1.22 per bus.
Rye	\$1.00 per bus.
Oats	37½¢ per bus.
Pork	\$6.00 per cwt.
Whiskey	37½¢ per gal.
Eggs	10¢ per doz.
Sugar	12¢ a lb.
Butter	15¢ a lb.
Cut nails	75¢ a lb.
Tea	75¢ a lb.
Labour	75¢ per day
Board of Labourer	\$1.50 per week

PUBLIC LIBRARY

A Public Library, or Mechanics Institute as it was called in the early days, was formed about 1888. When the first Library Board was raising money for books, one citizen, when approached to contribute, said "Well I have a book". Mr. Louis Moedinger and his niece Rose Grisdale were librarians for a number of years. The library was located in Mr. Moedinger's building in the room west of the hardware. Interest waned and the books were stored a few years, when Mr. G. B. Herbert, assistant Library Inspector came from Toronto to revive interest by promising a consignment of new books and a liberal grant. Some leading citizens took up the offer and had the books moved to Eric O. Oille's premises in 1924, and Mrs. Oille was appointed Librarian. Miss Spearman of the Toronto Department, came and helped install the Dewey Decimal System in 1927. The Library joined the County Association in . This brought added interest and new books to the library as a unit.

Entertainments of an educational nature were enjoyed each winter, and the proceeds were used to buy more books. Mrs. Oille resigned as Librarian in 1941 and in 1942 the Library was moved to Mr. Gorvett's store and Miss Helen Gorvett was appointed Librarian. From 1924 until 1948 the Board was favored in having Mr. Walter Rogers as chairman, with generally two ministers, two teachers and others on said board.

FALL FAIRS

"From about 1850 to 1870 Fall Fairs were held. There were no grounds where the fair met regularly each year, but it was held sometimes at one farm, at other times another, wherever the owner was agreeable and there was a good field available. There was no palace and no midway, but there were some spirited horse races in the afternoon. It was a fair for the farmers to show their grain, fruits, vegetables and stock. Prizes were given. People came with their families and celebrated the end of the harvest with a grand picnic in a grove".

SPARTA RURAL TELEPHONE CO. LTD.

On September 28th, 1908, the first meeting was held in Temperance Hall in Sparta to discuss organizing a Telephone Company. Martin L. Smith was elected President and Frank A. Schooley Sec'y.-Treas.

Dr. Brown of Aylmer was present and gave information as to how the Aylmer and Malahide company was started. Other meetings followed and in January, 1909, connection was established with Aylmer and later New Sarum.

In October 1909 a switchboard was purchased and installed in a building previously occupied as a harness shop by Mr. C. Pettit.

Incorporation as a Joint Stock Limited Co. was carried out at almost the same time and charter was granted December 23rd, 1910.

SPARTA TELEPHONE - (Continued)

On enquiring through the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, Montreal, by Miss Faith Rogers, their Historian W. A. MacLaren states "We have made a thorough search of our records to see if we could find any early Telephone history for Sparta as requested in your letter. I am sending a copy of a letter written in 1902 which contains some interesting information about Sparta. It says - Mr. Smith of Sparta is asking what bonus or guarantee the company would require to open an office in Sparta, which is five miles east of Union. At one time Sparta had telegraph service but the agent sold out his business and his successor was not an operator and the agency was closed. Some time afterwards the G. N. W. Telegraph Co. put the line in use again with a telephone at either end - St. Thomas and Sparta, but the people are not satisfied with that but want regular telephone connection with other places.

The first directory listing for Sparta was in the May 1907 directory and the subscribers were:

- 496G Eakins, E. O., Post Office and General Store
(Bell Telephone Co. Public Station).
- 496Y Leverton, H. S., Butcher
- 496I Shannon, Dr. G. A., Physician
- 496O Smith, E. A., Residence
- 496N Sterling Bank, Branch, Sparta."

Sparta Rural Telephone Co. was incorporated in 1908 with the following officers: President- Martin L. Smith, Vice-President - Dr. George Shannon, Secy.-Treas. - Frank Schooley. Two months later William F. Smith was appointed President to succeed his brother. They paid the South Malahide Co. \$30.00 annually for the privilege of entering the Aylmer switchboard. The first order for 'phones covered 49 wall models and one desk phone. The C. M. Pettit harness shop was purchased and the first hand-operated switchboard installed. Hydro for lighting and operating the switchboard was installed in 1925. Herbert S. Leverton, first general manager, was succeeded by Joseph Turrill and Gilbert D. Bailey, present Secy.-Treas. and lineman. William Clarridge and Harry Stafford were operators between 1909 and 1916 when Mr. and Mrs. William Carter gave faithful service for 33 years. When they retired in 1949 - Mr. and Mrs. J. Rewbotham and Mrs. J. Godby served. Also Mrs. Muriel Leverton, Mrs. Orville Martin, Mr. W. J. Brush and Mrs. Lampman.

The 1st day of June 1958 the Sparta Rural Telephone passed into oblivion. As the change to dial service took place at the St. Thomas exchange the local lines were automatically incorporated in the St. Thomas system.