

THE OLD TENTH CONCESSION SCHOOL

Almost at the door of the school house was the hill, just right for coasting in the winter. We would throw water on the snow to make it icy, much to the disgust of those who used the hill for regular traffic. Remember the bobsleighs and how a quick turn of the front sleigh would make a most beautiful spill, and great was the joy of those who were not fortunate enough to be in it. Those who had the best sleighs usually had the best standing with the girls. This one day caused a free fight, in which one boy chewed the other boy's ear almost off. We all enjoyed this very much, because it was unusual and very exciting.

Have you forgotten the old, old school house before we had the new desks? The desks around the three sides of the room where we sat on long benches facing the wall, waiting patiently for the command, "Books away", "Turn out", "Go", and at the word Go, we would make a dash for the door, down the hill, over the bridge and up into the little gully to the spring where falling upon our face and hands, we would drink long and loudly. This was all right if one was careful to keep the bugs, frogs, and small snakes away, but one little girl was careless or perhaps she could not see on account of the green scum that was usually over parts of the water. Anyway, she allowed a small frog to enter her mouth and being of a fussy nature, she told her mother and a tin cup was provided from which we all must drink - a most unsanitary thing to do. But after a while a new spring was opened up at the side of the road, half way down the hill. This was much better, and as stray cows and horses drank out of it, the frogs and snakes kept away and the scum was kept from forming on the top of the water. But we all liked the water from the old spring best.

Great improvements were made in the school house. New desks were installed, where we sat facing the teacher except when she would take a walk around the room and come up behind a fellow just when his mouth was full of forbidden apple, and by the time his mouth was empty so that he could explain, the damage had been done, only to be repeated in a few days, for it seemed as if a teacher never could learn that a fellow could not speak intelligently with his mouth full.

Do you remember the little stream that ran under the bridge across the road and meandered down through McVey's fields? There we would sigh day after day with spools of thread for sighing lines and bended pins for hooks. We caught no fish-- there were no fish there. They told us there were no fish there but we must find out for ourselves. A fool never learns by experience. The average man learns by his own experience. The wise man learns by the experience of others.

Were you one of those who sought shelter under the oak tree just west of the railroad track that afternoon that the tree was struck by lightning? How we remained there for a few minutes, and then made a dash for a farmhouse for better protection from the storm. That always seemed to be providential, for just as the last one entered the door a crash came and the tree was shattered to pieces by lightning. It was a wonderfully close call for all of us. I have often wondered if it would have been better for some of us if we had remained under the tree that day. I wonder if our chance in the great hereafter would have been better than it will be after a little while?

The following is a list of those I have been able to locate:

Winona Andrews, now Mrs. A. M. Hutchinson, St. Thomas.
Mary Jane Andrews, Now Mrs. Andrews, Vancouver, B. C.
Bella Andrews, Fresno, California.
Jonah Axford, St. Thomas.
Shed Billings, St. Thomas.
Jennie Basset, now Mrs. Archie Munroe, St. Thomas.
Hannah Brown, now Mrs. John Calcott, St. Thomas.
Hattie Brown, now Mrs. Dan Boughner, St. Thomas.
George Brown, Victoria, B. C.
Alex Hatten, Middlemiss.
Jerusha Calcott, now Mrs. E. H. Millington, Detroit, Mich.
Sarah Calcott, St. Thomas.
Chris Calcott, St. Thomas.
Miriam Hill, now Mrs. M. P. Kilpatrick, Los Angeles, California.
Annie Hill, now Mrs. W. H. Wigmore, N. Brighton, England.
James Hill, Los Angeles, California
Frank Locke, St. Thomas.
John D. Locke, St. Thomas.

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Marie Saywell, now Mrs. Louvering, Detroit, Mich.
Mary Ann Saywell, now Mrs. Wm. Logg, Detroit, Mich.
Wm. Saywell, Brantford.
James Saywell, St. Thomas.
Jennie Sinclair, now Mrs. John Henderson, Windsor.
Dan Sinclair, Oil Springs.
Malcolm (Coll) Sinclair, Bridgeburg, Ont.
Briget Shea, St. Thomas.
Philip Stephenson, London.
Theodore Trigger, St. Thomas.
Wesley Trigger, Townline.
Alice Weldon, Now Mrs. Wilson, St. Thomas.
Thomas Weldon, Chicago, Ill.
Mary Weldon, Now Mrs. Will H. Dallyn, St. Thomas.
Emma E. Weldon, now Mrs. J. W. Ferle, Lansing, Mich.
Lizzie Whitman, now Mrs. Thomas Baker, Lambeth.
Mary Walker, now Mrs. Mary Baleby, West Lorne.
Fred Walker, St. Thomas.

Yours truly,
James Hill.

It may be explained to those not fortunate enough to have once attended this old school, that the original school house was on the top of a then steep hill on the McLarty farm in North Yarmouth, but that when it came time to build a new school, it was erected on the Townline, and made a union section with a school in Southwold. However, the new location did not have the picturesqueness of the old. The steep hill was wanting, the hillside orchard of the McLarty's was wanting, the old swimming hole in Kettle Creek was wanting, and the deep, darkly mysterious McVey woods were wanting. Trace it back as you will, always you will find the McVey woods play a large share in the memories of those who attended this school. To each one of us it comes now, as Phoebe Carey described her youthful remembrances, "Of all the beautiful pictures that hang on Memory's wall, There is one of a dim old forest that seemeth the best of all."

The McVey woods were directly across the road from the little packing box of a school house and thither the children resorted in droves, rarely, if ever do you see a woods now with so many cherry trees--the towering wild cherry trees--the kind that boys like to climb. As you went deeper and deeper into this woods, it grew darker and more mysterious, and last thrill of all, you reached a steep, crossed ravine, a perfect thicket--where only the bolder boy spirits even dared to venture, the girls and smaller boys contented themselves by walking along the edges, hoping to catch a glimpse of the wild things of the forest, that were supposed to live in the dim depths of the ravine. However a pretty thorough exploration of this ravine failed to disclose anything more than the usual red squirrels and chipmunks, with an occasional black squirrel, and numerous fox holes along the steep sides, except one memorable day when the boys routed out a large bird--a young turkey buzzard, and succeeded in capturing it after a long chase. That was the most unusual thing this ravine ever yielded up, but it served to provide thrills and mystery aplenty for two generations of children. After all it is not the complete things of life that impines deeply into our memories, it's the simple things our God strews so freely round about.

STORIES OF THE TOWNLINE SCHOOL

By J. A. McBain

I started to the old school on this property (that is the one torn down after the new school was built) in September 1917. I believe the teacher at that time was a Miss Munroe from St. Thomas. As I was the only pupil in Class 1, it was possible for me to complete Grades 1 and 2 in the first year. The enrolment in the school would be around 14. I can only think of five persons still residing in the community that went to the school when I did: Bill Glenn, Agnes Glenn McPherson, Walter Rapelje, Morley Blewett and Carl Ferguson.

In 1918 our teacher was Marguriete McBane, Hugh and Duncan McBane's sister. She later married Jim Ferguson, Norman and Alex's half-brother. In my second year there was two of us in grades 3 and 4, so again we completed two grades in one year.

Some interesting things I remember of those years was when a tramp came into the boys lobby and cloak entrance and helped himself to a number of lunches. Mine was one of them. He took them over in the Church shed and had a real picnic. The other students shared their lunches with those that did not have any. I believe this happened more than once, but as I recall I was a victim only once. On another occasion, while we were playing ball, a boy managed to hit me in the face with a stick and my tooth went through my lip.

Marguriete McBane lived where Hugh McBane lived as that was the homestead, and she went home for lunch. The pupils used to go to her place at noon hour and walk back to the school with her. Hugh McBane kept sheep at that time and had a ram that was very fond of bunting with his head. I remember being caught by the ram in the rear exterior (that was because I was running away from him). I never felt the same respect towards sheep since.

Our annual Christmas Concert was always the highlight of the school. Not having lights in the school and the enrollment being not large enough, the school joined forces with the Sunday School for the Christmas Concert in the Church with oil lamps.

On the southeast corner of the Townline and the 12th Concession was the Grange Hall. Grange members would hold public meetings, concerts, box socials and oyster suppers in the hall. It was at one of these oyster suppers that I had my first taste of oyster stew and being told if I swallowed the oysters whole they could be felt swimming around in my stomach.

SCHOOL SECTION # 24 SOUTHWOLD AND # 25 YARMOUTH

The school known as # 24 Southwold and # 25 Yarmouth was situated on the townline between Yarmouth and Southwold (later called the Wellington Road) about two miles north-west of St. Thomas.

The land comprising 625/1000 of an acre was purchased from Samuel Freeman for \$110.00 and the frame school was built in 1874. It served the community for forty-nine years and then, when St. George Street and Lynhurst were built up more and so many scholars came from that district, it was thought advisable to build a school further south. One and one-half acres of land were purchased from Henry Pressey for \$800.00 and a modern two room red brick school was built in 1923.

On December 28, 1923, the old school and land were sold by public auction to the highest bidder, Mr. E. McCaulley of Malahide Township, for \$488.75. The following year, September 6, 1924, Mr. McCaulley sold it to Mr. A.D. and Mr. C.C. Askew of Lynhurst for \$625.00. They kept bees and stored honey there for two years and on November 2, 1926 they sold the land to Henry Freeman, son of the former owner for \$255.00 and the school building to Mr. Wesley Trigger for \$225.00. Mr. Trigger removed the building to his farm and used it for an implement shed. Mr. Freeman cut the trees down and removed the fence, so today nothing remains there of the old frame school house but a memory.

The following are the names of most of the teachers and trustees:

Mr. Young	Mr. Archie Coulter	Mr. Will Haight
Mr. C. Sinclair	Miss Taylor	Mr. Chas. Brant
Miss Kirkpatrick	Miss Edith Murray	Miss Woods
Mr. U. Bailey	Miss Jennie Lees	Miss Bertha Axford
Miss Anna Dodd	Miss Ruby Hill	Miss Clara Saywell
Miss Florence Whiting	Miss E. Haines	Miss M. Heenan
Mrs. Hicks	Miss Winnie Gillard	Miss Myrtle McBain
Miss E. Turner		

TRUSTEES

Mr. E. Eastabrook	John Andrews	Henry Freeman
Wm. Hill	Wm. Dodd, Sr.	Archie Munroe
Albert Calcott	Jonas Axford	Wm. Dodd, Jr.
Chas. Saywell (21 years)	John Munroe	
Fred Hill	James Hill	

In the early days the older boys took turns in looking after the fire, sweeping floors etc. Later they were paid ten cents a day in the winter and five cents a day in the summer. In 1906 the total expenditure for the school was \$338.46. This included teacher's salary \$225.00. Janitor fees \$20.00, 6 cords of wood at \$2.25 a cord, insurance \$2.00, cleaning well \$1.50, cleaning school twice at \$3.00, cleaning of clock 75¢, two brooms 25¢ each.

Twenty years later, in 1926, the total expenditures for the same school section, though a new school was \$2,684.25. This included two teacher's salaries. In another twenty years, 1946, the total expenditure was over \$4,000.00.

written by Muriel Freeman, 1946

SCHOOL SECTION # 24 SOUTHWOLD AND # 25 YARMOUTH

Teachers who taught at the school built and
opened in 1874

TABER

The first teacher of this school believed in the principle "Spare the rod and spoil the child" as a means of maintaining order. He depended much on one boy especially to go after switches from the nearby woods so that he could use them upon unruly pupils and so maintain order. Taber was a short sturdy man possessing peculiar manners. After his teaching career he lived in London where he died in the insane asylum.

YOUNG

Sylvester N. Young was a remarkably clever man and excellent teacher and was much respected by all the pupils. He won discipline not by threatening punishment but by a persuasive means of settlement of any difficulty. After resigning here, he went to take charge of the Talbotville school, which had a bad reputation for order, but on the opening day he strongly advised the pupils that he must have order and by his persuasive way of addressing them, had no trouble while teaching.

After discontinuing to teach he went to Michigan to study law, but was persuaded by Mrs. John Trigger to take up the study of medicine, which he did, and in 1889 he graduated in Medicine with the degree of M.D.C.M. at Trinity University Medical School. He practiced at Futchter, Ontario and later in Ridgetown, Ontario. He was Medical Health Officer for that vicinity. He died in Ridgetown.

HEIGHT

Will Height was quite a young man when he taught in this school, and was educated in the schools in St. Thomas, also obtaining a teachers certificate. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Issac Height who resided at the extreme west end of Talbot Street on the south side. Will was a very amiable and smart young chap with good prospects, but unfortunately, he contracted tubercular disease which ended his short but useful life.

SINCLAIR

Colin Malcolm Sinclair was born on a farm which was located on the 10th concession of North Yarmouth, where his father and mother settled as early pioneers of that district. He possessed good teaching ability and endeared himself to his pupils and took an active part with them in their sports. He was an excellent Lacrosse player, a true Canadian game, which was the foremost amusement during those days. As he had great literary ability he had the opportunity to successfully teach these allied subjects.

After he resigned from teaching he entered the Civil Service in the government postal department on the M. C. R. between St. Thomas and Fort Erie, which he held for a good many years. It was while on this run he devoted much of his spare time to writing and was a regular correspondent for a number of years to the St. Thomas Times-Journal, under the title of the "Inglenook" during the winter months and "The Open Road" in the summer season. It was while on mail service run on the Courtright line of the M. C. R. he contributed much of his literary work. One of his best known works is entitled "The Dear Old Farm". This is a noted contribution to Canadian literature, rich in historic incident and sentiment, based on his boyhood experiences and associations in this district, where he attended the old Tenth Concession School.

SCHOOL SECTION # 24 SOUTHWOLD AND # 25 YARMOUTH

COULTER

Archibald (Archie) was born and lived during his boyhood days upon the Coulter homestead on the north side of the 12th concession road, west of the townline in Southwold township and attended the public school known as the Twelfth Concession School. He also attended the St. Thomas schools where he obtained a teachers permit and was appointed by the trustees to teach in this school. After discontinuing teaching he passed the civil service examination and was appointed on the Canadian Mail Service running out of St. Thomas. His parents were goodly and honorable neighbours. Archie was a tall athletic young man of dark complexion with polite and dignified manners.

MURRAY

Miss Edith Murray was born and educated in the schools of Toronto, Ont. where her parents resided. Miss Murray was a very talented person - a good debater with a good flow of language, with an expressive delivery that made her an entertaining conversationalist. When she resigned as teacher of this school she received an appointment at Alma College in St. Thomas, on the faculty as an elocunist. She was an ardent member of Knox Presbyterian Church and was a great admirer of the preacher the Rev. J. H. McDonald, who later was appointed editor of the Globe newspaper in Toronto. She married and lived in Vancouver.

BRENT

Charlie Brent was of English extraction coming to St. Thomas in the early '70's' His father was employed in the old Canada Southern shops making boilers. It was said that he had learned this trade in the Old Country. At a later date he built a shop on St. George St. north, with the help of a relative named Ward, and supplied the railroad shop where he formerly worked. This shop was located on the north side of St. George Street, where William Caughell lived for a number of years. His son, Charlie, went to the townline school and to the High School in St. Thomas obtaining a teachers certificate before going to finish his education at the University of Toronto. He distinguished himself as being by far the smartest student that ever graduated from that institution. He went with his parents to live for a short time on the island of Trinidad, in the West Indies, so that he could study the floral distribution of the island. His notable natural history contribution gained for him the highest honour the University can bestow - the M. A. Degree.

Charlie experimented much in the science of electricity. Far in advance of many of his day, he constructed poles along St. George St. in front of his home, wired and used carbon arc light construction long before this system of lighting was used on the Main street in St. Thomas. In the old school where he taught, he gave a talk and demonstration at an evening entertainment for the people of the neighborhood to their amazement.

For a while he was in business in Buffalo, N. Y. selling chemical fire extinguishers in tank cylinders. After leaving Buffalo he became interested in mining development in the north country of Canada and became an expert assayer for mining companies. He once had an office in London, Ont. as Chemist and Metallurgist.

BAILEY

Ulysses Bailey came here to teach in the old school from Aylmer, Ont. where he lived with his parents. He was educated at the public and high school in Aylmer and received his permit to teach. After leaving here he studied to be a chemist and druggist. He practiced his profession for a number of years in Detroit, Mich.