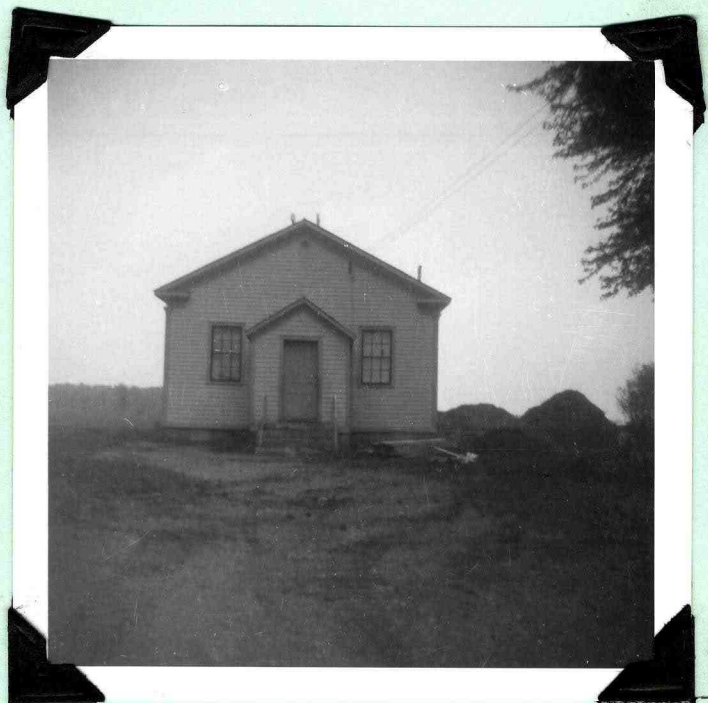


SKELDINGS SCHOOL

S. S. # 27, YARMOUTH

1860 - 1969



The land on which Skeldings School was built was deeded June 14, 1860. At that time George Skelding owned the north half of Lot 14, Concession 12, and he donated the land on the north-west corner of his farm on which the new school was to be erected. The lot was three chains deep, and one chain (sixty-six and three-quarter links) across the front, on the south side of the 13th concession road. The school, a frame building, was given the name of the donor of the site, and was known as "Skeldings School".

In the early days, the pupils numbering about one hundred, sat on benches around the wall. The blackboards were just painted boards and they were given a fresh coat of black paint from time to time. The students did their lessons on slates, and text books were unknown. George Skelding Jr. had a tin box made at the blacksmith's shop, complete with lock and key. It was eighteen inches long and six inches deep. It was to be used by the Secretary for the storage of documents and was in his possession for a number of years, but no one seems to know now what happened to it. In 1899 a box of chalk cost 20¢, a new broom 25¢, and the teacher's salary for the year was \$250.00.

The period from 1901 to 1911 was a period of change at the school. In the Spring of 1901 a new well was dug and a new pump installed. In 1903 a new fence was built to replace the old rail fence and the old well was filled in. In 1906 the blackboards were given a fresh coat of paint. In 1909 the school was shingled and the chimney repaired. The building was put on a new cement wall and new steps were built. It might be interesting to quote the costs of these improvements. The shingling cost \$48.86, the chimney \$6.00 for labour and 50¢ for bricks, the new steps \$14.63 and \$105.00 to put the building on the new cement wall! In 1910 the school and school-room were painted and the following year new slate blackboards were installed.

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In 1912 Angus Taylor, who now owned the Skelding farm, deeded one rod by one chain for \$12.50. This was added to the south side of the lot and this portion was used for individual gardens kept up by each pupil. Colin McIntyre was hired to move the fence and he also plowed up and disced the garden plot. An Agricultural Grant was given the board each year and the money was used to buy seeds, tools and a wheelbarrow for the gardens as well as some agricultural books. These grants seem to have been given from 1917 to 1929 and again from 1937 to 1940. At the same time a Domestic Science grant was given from about 1922 to 1936, and this was used to provide hot lunches to the students at the noon hour during the winter months. An oil stove was used in their preparation and the work was done by the students under the supervision of the teacher. While we are speaking of grants, the money came in to the Treasurer in the fall. Meanwhile he had to have funds to pay the expenses of the school so it became customary for the Secretary-Treasurer to forward the money required by the board on a loan which would be paid back as soon as the grant came in. This went on every year until 1927, when rising school costs made it imperative to find some other method of financing the board and then they started borrowing the money from the Bank of Nova Scotia in Belmont.

Communicable diseases were a problem in that day and the school was closed at various times due to outbreaks of scarlet fever, whooping cough and diphtheria. After one particularly bad outbreak of diphtheria in 1921, in which a student died, Dr. Beattie came down from Belmont and fumigated the school.

It is not known exactly when the first desks were bought for the school, but new desks were purchased in 1924. In the same year a new floor was laid at a cost of \$158.50, and the trustees decided that this floor would be oiled three times a year with the board supplying the oil and the janitor applying it.

In 1928 some changes were made in the building. The two windows on the south side were boarded up, and the three windows on the west side were closed with heavy blinds. Four new windows were added on the east side and the building was given a coat of paint. The interior of the school was painted in 1930, the colours chosen were cream and gray. In January 1934 the box stove that had heated the building since it was built was replaced by one of the same type. It cost \$25.00 and was purchased from Medlyn Bros. Wood was the fuel used to heat the schoolroom. Inside chemical toilets were built in 1936 and the next year the building was painted white with gray trim, a new fence with a new gate was built across the front of the yard, and the other fences repaired. A small Union Jack was purchased for the classroom.

A library had been started a number of years before and books were added to it periodically, including a set of the Books of Knowledge. In 1938 the board began to supply the pupils with all their books and supplies and a number of new books were bought to help with the new course of study.

A Music grant was begun in 1934 and a piano was purchased for the school in December of 1933. The first music teacher was Mrs. Grandy and in 1938 James Medlyn was engaged to teach music. On June 2nd 1939 the children sang at the Music Festival in St. Thomas, entering a chorus, duet and two solos. On June 7th they were taken to London for the Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Mr. Medlyn seems to have been the music teacher until about 1942. Mrs. Inez (Barons) Smith was the next teacher and Mrs. McLachlin of Glanworth was engaged as music teacher in 1949. In 1952 the pupils sang at the St. Thomas Music Festival entering a chorus and two solos. Mrs. McLachlin was their pianist. They entered again in 1953 and took second place in the category of One Room Rural School singing in unison. Mr. Carl Edmonds was the next music teacher and the pupils continued to take part in the festival each fall. They entered in 1961, and again in 1962,

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taking a second place in Rural School Choir, one room (unison), and a third place in two part singing. In 1963 they took second place in two part singing. Mrs. Ternyck of Aylmer was music teacher in 1965 and the pupils entered in the St. Thomas festival taking first place for two part singing in the one room division. They also entered the Rotary Club's festival at Tillsonburg the same year taking a second place in Rural School Choirs. Mrs. Lancaster was the last music teacher at the school. The present piano was purchased in October of 1963.

In March of 1940 the hydro was installed in the school. In January of 1944 the board decided to take advantage of the Elgin County Library Association's Travelling Library Service, and in this way a good supply of books was made available for the children's reading pleasure. War Savings Stamps were bought for the pupils during the war years but early in 1946 it was decided that this practice would be discontinued as soon as their present books were filled.

During 1943, '44 and '45 only seven pupils were enrolled and the trustees gave serious consideration to closing the school. In the fall of 1946 only six pupils were attending, but in November two new pupils were added. In September of 1947 twelve pupils were attending. Two more families with children moved into the section, and the school took on new life. From that time on there was never any difficulty about not having enough pupils.

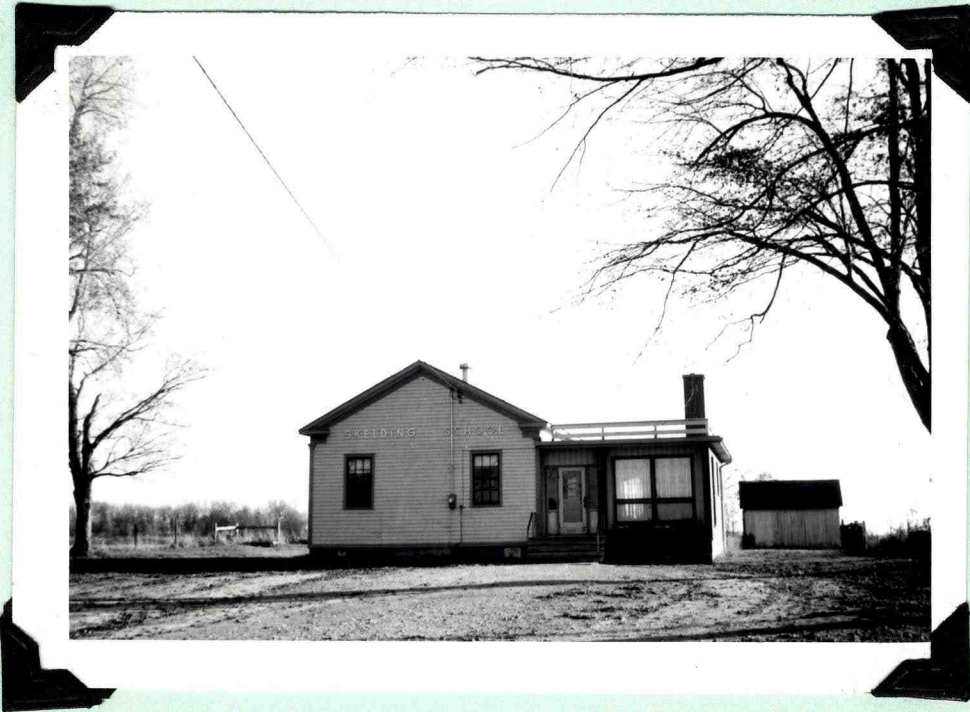
The water situation here had always been troublesome and as early as 1942 the board had given consideration to drilling a well. Somehow this matter was always deferred and water was carried in a pail from various neighbouring farms for drinking and other purposes. In 1948 it was decided that it would be the janitor's responsibility to see that there was an adequate supply of water at the school each day. This continued from year to year until a ratepayer's meeting was called in February 1957. Mr. Rawlings, School Inspector, was present and spoke of the advantages of having an adequate supply of good water on the school grounds. It was decided at that meeting that the board would drill a well, the expenses of the drilling to be taken care of by a five year debenture.

Another ratepayer's meeting was called in March of 1962. Thirty five ratepayers met to discuss plans to remodel the present building which was then over one hundred years old. Mr. Green, Architect, displayed three different plans that could be used. Mr. Rawlings, Inspector, and Mr. Carl Voaden, Health Inspector, also addressed the meeting. It was voted upon and the board of trustees was authorized to spend up to \$9900.00 to remodel the school. An addition was to be built to house toilets, teacher's room, and a furnace room with an oil furnace to be installed. The above costs were to include the renovations to the present classroom. Another meeting of the ratepayers was called for the evening of July 16th. Dugald Campbell, Chairman of the board explained that the tenders submitted for the renovations to S. S. # 27 were above the amount first specified. Mr. Fred Green explained briefly blaming rising costs of construction. A motion was made that the board be allowed an additional \$4500.00. A poll was taken--the results: for 19, against 4. It was moved that debentures be taken out for a period of ten years if approved by the Department of Education.

A social evening was held in the school on Friday Nov. 30th so that the ratepayers would have a chance to see the school now that the renovations were complete.

In 1963 four students were accepted from S. S. # 22 at Mapleton. In 1964 a new fence was built around the school yard and it was decided to move the woodshed to the south-east corner of the yard. A telephone was also to be installed in the school. It was decided that a social evening would be held in the school following the annual meeting on December 30th. It was the last gathering at the school under the auspices of the local school board as the Yarmouth Township school board took over control of the schools in January 1965.

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In the 1968-1969 term the children were "bussed" and grades four, five and six were taught at Skeldings with Mrs. Ethel Agar their teacher. The Elgin County Board of Education took official control of the schools on January 1st, 1969. When school classes resumed in the fall the pupils from Skeldings attended the new Yarmouth Township # 2 school at New Sarum. Everything of any use in the old school was removed to the new school during the summer months and on November 29, 1969, the building and the remaining contents were sold by auction. The purchaser was Duncan Black, Architect, of St. Thomas. The school was sold again in 1970 to be converted into a private residence.

Through the many years of its existence Skeldings School had always been a polling division of North Yarmouth.

The day of the country schoolhouse has come to an end. Rural Schools such as # 27 have played an important part in moulding the character of its graduates, and Skeldings is no exception. Students have gone on to higher education and then to important places in the world of Commerce, Science, Education, Medicine and other professions. We look back with affection and pride to the teachers who have taught here and the pupils who have passed through this building under their guidance. We look forward to a new ere in education in which our children will progress along with the advances being made in every field of endeavour. So it is with pride and sorrow that we bid adieu to the country schoolhouse.

This is the last. Look long, for by next September
The weeds will grow rank, untrampled,
The silence pall,
While the jagged edges
Of first-broken panes in the windows
Spell their final message,
The hand-writing on the wall.
The tongue of the old school-bell
Will peal no longer
And the twin-ribboned trail,
Dust-cushioned and warm with sun,
Will await in vain
The thunder of bare feet pounding,
For the day of the country schoolhouse
Is nearly done.

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TEACHERS

1899	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Noble
1900	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Flora M. Buchanan
1901	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Ada C. Walker
1902	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Mary Bucke
1903	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Mary Bucke
1904	Jan. - June	Miss Maude Fonger
	Sept.- Dec.	Miss Maude Fonger
	Dec.	Miss Jessie Ferguson
1905	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Flora Buchanan (Mrs. Roy Sanders) subs.
1906	Jan. - June	J. A. Campbell
	Sept.- Dec.	J. A. Campbell
1907	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Mary Bucke
1908	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Mary Bucke
1909	Jan. - Dec.	Miss Mary Bucke
1910	Jan. - June	Colin Campbell
	Sept.- Dec.	Miss Jennie McGregor (Culham)
1911	Jan. - June	Miss Ada Stoner

Sept. 1911 - June 1912	Miss Grace Graham
Sept. 1912 - June 1914	Miss Emma Cline
Sept. 1914 - June 1918	Miss Myrtle McBain (McBain)
Sept. 1918 - Dec. 1919	Miss Olive Weaver (Ferguson)
Jan. 1920 - June 1920	Miss Alma Munroe (Dundas)
Sept. 1920 - June 1922	Miss Tena McVicar
Sept. 1922 - June 1923	Miss Bernice Monck (Taylor)
Sept. 1923 - June 1928	Miss Hazel Thomson (Runions)
Sept. 1928 - June 1931	Miss Pearl Campbell (Flowers)
1931	Mrs. Harold Burgess supply
Sept. 1931 - June 1936	Miss Gertrude Sells (Davies)
Sept. 1936 - June 1939	Miss Jean Burtwistle (Parsons)
Sept. 1939 - June 1943	Miss Ellen Holborn (Scott)
Sept. 1943 - June 1944	Miss Dorothy Gillies (DeGraw)
Sept. 1944 - June 1946	Mrs. Bessie Fowler
Sept. 1946 - Dec. 1946	Miss Marie Ferguson (Briggs)
Jan. 1947 - June 1950	Mrs. Ardath (Cline) Millard