



Township of Melancthon
Heritage Advisory Committee
One Room Schoolhouse Project
S.S. #9
Macville School
By: Member Todd McIntosh



Background

(Known as both the Catholic School and Macville)

Location: Part Lot 7, Con 3 N.E. (4) - 623011 280 Sideroad, Melancthon

History: The following has been transcribed from the Logbook.

When this school section was formed, it embraced a larger area than it does now. It extended as far south-east as the present village of Melancthon., which is now partly in the school district No. 11 and partly in No, 7.

The early Church settlers were, for the most part, English, Irish and Scotch. There were three religious denominations, Presbyterian, Methodists and Roman Catholic. The only church that has ever been in the section is the Roman Catholic, built in 1881 and which is situated on the same road as the school, between the school corner and the highway. Among the early settlers were such names as Breen, McCue, McManamen, Culliton and Tipping, of these there remains McCues, McManamens and Cullitons. The settlement began in about 1850. The food and clothing of the people were obtained almost entirely from the farms.

The first school, which was built in 1872, was made of logs. It was very small, being only about twenty-five feet by twenty-five feet. The school was situated about halfway in the mile between the highway and the corner where the school now stands. It was used for only ten years when a new and better school was built in 1882. The second school was built on the south-west corner. It was red brick and it was used until 1928 when it was torn down after the present new school was built.

The school now in use is quite modern in its construction. It has lighting from only one side, separate basement for boys and girls and separate cloak rooms, indoor toilets, a library room and a teacher's room. It is heated by means of a furnace in the basement. The school is of red brick and the wooden parts are painted white. The school yard is large and level.

The earliest teacher held second and third-class certificates. The salaries paid between 1872 and 1882 ranged from \$225 to \$275. In 1887 when a male teacher came, he was given \$300 which was considered a large salary at the time. The teachers were paid in money and boarded during the whole school year at one place where the board paid was not high. The main subjects of study at that time were reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, history and geography.

The section contributed some people to public life and to the professions. One of these was Mr. William Sutherland, who attended the first school. He became a lawyer when he grew up and practiced in the Canadian west. While there he represented a constituency in the federal government and was a cabinet minister. There were also two doctors. Peter and P. J. McCue, sons of Mr. James McCue who was one of the pioneer settlers. Another former pupil, Robert Sloane, became a dentist and practiced in Leamington. The teaching profession had five adherents from this section, four women and one man. The women were all McCues, the Misses Nellie and Anastatia McCue, daughters of the previously mentioned James McCue. These two graduated in about 1900 and some of their teaching experience was obtained in the local school. Two other lady teachers, Molly and Gertrude McCue, who graduated about 1930, are daughters of Mr. M. J. McCue. Mr. Charles Matthews, the only male teacher, taught for one year in the school he attended as a boy. He later obtained a university degree and is now a Separate School inspector for Kingston and district.

The social life of the people during the early years was not very different from what it is today. There were many good singers and musicians who were valuable aids at picnics, garden parties and house parties, which were the most common social gatherings. The sports in which they indulged consisted chiefly in racing, ball playing and horse races. The population at that time was larger than it is today, and the community was quite self-sufficient. With the coming of the motor car and increased travel, the tendency has been gradually away from community gatherings.

The first post office was at Melancthon and it was there almost as soon as the section was settled. Rural mail service was not inaugurated until some years later. The first roads were very poor and rough, the most improved one being the one connecting Owen Sound and Toronto. It was later made a gravel road and in 1932 it was paved and became a provincial highway. Travel was entirely by buggy and wagon until the introduction of motor cars. Agricultural implements were very crude at first but with the inventions and widespread use of farm machinery, more modern methods are now employed.

About 1928 fifth form was begun in the school, and it has continued since. The first two years of high school are now taught, which makes it necessary for the teacher to have a first-class certificate. Subjects have been added to the public school curriculum such as hygiene, agriculture, art and in 1934 a special music teacher, Miss Gardner of Dundalk, was engaged to teach music. It is taught in a half hour period each week. The school pupils took part in a musical festival which was held at Orangeville on the last day of the teacher convention in the autumn of 1934.

The school has taken part in school fairs which are held throughout the county, and which for this group, are held in Corbetton. At the fairs, the children compete in exhibits, physical exercises, recitations, public speaking and songs.

Annual updates in the Logbook of S. S. #9

1942-1943: The children of S.S. #9 held a quilting bee, and the parents came and quilted the quilt which the children had made, and tickets were sold and a total of \$52 was raised. The money went for war purposes. In November, the attendance of our school was only fifteen pupils - the lowest in many years. Seven dollars was won by this school for its display in Shelburne fair. In May 1943, school did not close for Victoria Day. In the afternoon, we visited a nearby bush, examined different spring flowers and afterwards the school enjoyed a wiener roast. Everyone reported an excellent way to spend the 24th.

1943-1944: On September 23, this school won first prize for its display at Shelburne fair. The main feature of the display was Melancthon's model farm - featuring house, barns, animals, in such a way to constitute a model farm. The garden bench, and the children's knitting and woodwork, made an interesting display. In May, three of our pupils were recommended for their year's work to help on the farms where there is a serious shortage of farm help. In this month also, the boys completed the tables at which they have been working in the winter months. Under the direction of Miss Gardner, a rhythm band has been started in the school.

1944-1945: Miss Madeline Ronan was succeeded by Miss Eleanor Clarke of Shelburne as teacher at S.S. #9 Melancthon for 1944-1945. The serious shortage of farm labour made it necessary again this year to grant Entrance certificates to pupils who successfully passed the Farm Leave Examinations written at Easter. The six pupils who followed the Farm Leave plan were successful and all are working on farms. Also, one Grade IX pupil was successful.

1945-1946: Many of our boys who served overseas have (or are) returning home now. We hope to have them relate here in school their adventures in those countries of which we may only read. Our Grade IX this year comprises six pupils, the largest yet on record. Of those who attended this school and served overseas are Kenneth Wallace, Harold Whitten, John Culliton and Buddy Dodds. Harold Whitten and Buddy Dodds paid the supreme sacrifice. Plans are being made to have our school repainted during the summer vacation. Trellises have been ordered by the pupils who earned money singing at the fair and are putting it to use beautifying our school grounds.

1946-1947: During summer vacation our school was redecorated. The general improvement is quite noticeable. our trellises bring many compliments. Two of our pupils won many laurels by singing Bell Bottom Trousers in Shelburne on Young Canada Night. Two of our pupils were asked to sing at the Farm Forum Rally held in Horning's Mills and they received many compliments. We have now one little pupil who has come from Scotland and she can tell us many things about her homeland. With money received from singing, our school purchased an indoor hockey game which interested the pupils during the winter months.

1947-1948: Our school won third prize, five dollars, for its display at Shelburne fair. Four of our pupils earned three dollars for dramatizing a story on Young Canada Night - the first night of the fair. The Public Health Nurse visits our school once a month now. During the last term, we had five beginners. This has been the most in the past ten years. Our nature excursion to Newell's bush was much enjoyed by the pupils. We had a picnic lunch in the bush after we had observed baby fern, white and red trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpits, and several types of fungi. We have planned another trip, the last day of school, with a picnic at my home afterward.

1948-1949: Mrs. McCue was succeeded by Shirley Johnston of Dundalk. A new family moved into this school district from Toronto. Three attend Melancthon #9. They are Patrick, Francis and Catherine. We have begun practice for our Christmas program that we are having on December 19. The children are very eager. Miss Gardner comes to teach music on Wednesdays and Mr. Jackson comes to give extra religious instruction. The pupils painted the stones and re-painted the trellises, old lawn ornaments and two old bird houses. The boys made two new birdhouses for the two front posts. We planted gladiolas, dahlias and some annuals. The Melancthon institute presented two climbing rose bushes to the school. With some of the money received at the Christmas concert we purchased an outdoor game of croquet for six players. Mr. Hill, the Secretary Treasurer moved from this area. The new secretary is Mr. Elvin Whitten. The other members of the school board are Chairperson, Manson Madill, Trustee, Walter McIntosh, and Millard Whitten.

1949-1950: November, the teacher resigned, replaced by Velma Funston of Corbetton. May 1950 The board is Sec. treas. Mr. Elvin Whitten, trustees, Mr. Walter McIntosh, Mr. Ken McLachlan, Mr. Millard Whitten (chairman).

List of Teachers

The following list of teachers has been transcribed from a scrapbook titled:
Tweedsmuir History of Melancthon Institute 4th and 5th Line Compiled by Evelyn
Gallaughier and Beth Looby.

Mrs. Madeline (Ronan) McCue
Mrs. Lonsway
Mrs. Harvey Ellis
Mrs. Cullotin
Charles Matthews
Mrs. T. McPhadden
Gertrude McCue
Mrs. Marna McComb
Mrs. Anderson
Mrs. Allen McKelvie
Mrs. Maurice Oldfield (supply)
Miss. Love
Miss. Eleanor Clark
Miss. Shirley Johnston
Mrs. Harvey Funston

Mrs. Harold Flear, from Horning's Mills, was the final teacher.

The school was closed in January 1968 and the pupils went by bus to Centennial
Hylands School in Shelburne. Mr. Harvey Howes made this school into a dwelling.

As I Recall...

The following story has been submitted by a former student

In about 1946, as a beginning student, I stood on Sideroad 280, just east of the 2nd
line NE. I was impressed as I stood looking up at the modern structure, covered in rich
red brick and white trim. At that time, most of the students, like me, lived in local
farmhouses, and to us, this was an inviting place to begin our education.

This experience was about seventy-five years ago so some of the details have dimmed,
but with help from some other alumni, I have described it as it is remembered.

A cement sidewalk led from the grassy road shoulder to the front door, a large wooden front door. On entering, wide wooden stairs rose steeply to an open doorway, enticing a nervous but excited freshman to boldly climb. At the top, one had to stop and stare. "Move along," was the order, "boys to the right, girls to the left." In each direction, was a cloak room, with hooks for outside clothing i.e. cloaks, and above the hooks, were shelves for lunch pails. In one corner, a toilet was partially enclosed, with an open door. Wow, an indoor toilet. The future would prove that the door had a latch for privacy, which on rare occasions, worked.

Returning to the main room, one was intrigued by the ceiling, at least twelve feet high. The front wall was blackboard, with letters, script and print, running above the board. In the middle, hung a framed picture of King George VI. The teacher's desk sat below the king, with a bell on one corner and the daily register on the side. The floor beside the teacher's desk included a large heating register which allowed the wood furnace in the basement to heat the ground floor. The register was large enough to hold several students, wanting nothing more than warmth on cold winter days. One former student recalls standing there until the metal on her garter belt was so hot that she had to move.

The west facing side was always fascinating, with huge windows and a view of the playground, the 2nd line and the green fields beyond. Electricity did not come to the school until 1953 so the many windows provided light to carry out the daily studies. The windowsill was a display shelf for art, and depending on the teacher, plants were often growing there. In the winter, geraniums with their distinctive and almost pleasant odour, were a favourite. Robert Cullum, a children's author, may have attended a similar school prior to writing his well-known book, *The Geranium on the Windowsill Died But Teacher You Just Went Right On*. Student desks were one piece, wood and metal, with a groove for pencils along the top and an ink well in the top right corner, well positioned for right-handed children.

The east wall had a door which led into the library and another into the teacher's room. Often the doors would be closed, with little heat from the furnace or the sun reaching the rooms. The library was a cold but exciting place. Other students have told me that the most exciting day of the year was the day that the travelling library arrived, a wooden box full of books to be in our school for a month. I don't recall that library being well stocked but there was always an encyclopedia set, the books that held the answer to any question.

The source of heat, the furnace, was in the basement. Beside it, the risers used in December for the Christmas extravaganza (concert), were stored. There would still be room for a rollicking game of hockey when rainy days came.

The yard was a joy to any student. It seemed large, and it was flat, with several rows of coniferous trees in the northwest corner. The teacher rarely came to the yard and if she did, the trees still shielded the students who were involved in suspicious activities. There was a ball diamond, and it was always a delight when the teacher decided to get involved.

The day, as I recall, went from nine until four. Most students walked or biked to school, with a car ride or a sleigh ride on a cold winter day, being a rare treat. Lower grades sat by the windows with seniors on the opposite side. The day started with God Save the King (or Queen), followed by a scripture reading and the Lord's Prayer. Then students were asked to fold their hands on top of their desk, with a clean hanky. Teachers would go up and down the aisles, checking for clean nails and a clean hanky. A Health mark on the next report card would reflect the success of the morning check-up. The morning lessons were usually reading and arithmetic/mathematics, with a fifteen-minute recess in the middle. Winter lunchtime would be exciting as hot soup was sometimes served. Friday afternoons often involved activities like woodworking or sewing. The teacher's log of 1950 reported that these items were sold at a spring tea and raised "almost \$23". It was at that time that I was taught knitting, a skill that produced valuable dishcloths for sale at the tea and prepared me for my life ahead. On occasion, a minister would visit with a message, and a music teacher came on a regular basis.

The Christmas Concert was the event of the year. Trustees would visit a few weeks before and position the risers at the front of the classroom. A wire was strung from side to side, with a curtain on it to give the performers their privacy and to build suspense among nervous parents. December must have been Arts month as the concert seemed to take over, with daily practices involving skits, recitations and songs. On concert night, the school would be packed with excited families, eager to witness the talented S.S. #9 students and to evaluate how this teacher had prepared them.

The one room school often resembled a family home, happy and cooperative on good days, and somewhat dysfunctional on bad days. During my time at #9, there were few conflicts between students or between students and the teacher. It was a happy place, a safe place, and a community place. Parents were never far away and were accessible to the school or the teacher. Independence and responsibility came with knowledge, as teaching eight grades meant that teacher time was limited. The student and the

teacher developed an understanding for each other through days together in one room, often for several years.

We can't go back, but we can remember.



1950

Back row: Eleanor Sparks (teacher), Joan Matthews, Wynn Winch, Maureen Matthews, Marie McIntosh, Barbara Clark.

Second row: Clark, Jeannie McLauchlin, Grace Matthews, Ruth Matthews, Jeanette Madill, Pearl Clark.

Front row: Bill McIntosh, Harold Clark, Frank Borsa, Jim Madill, Keith Winch, Don McIntosh, Don McLauchlin.