



**Township of Melancthon**  
**Heritage Advisory Committee**  
**One Room Schoolhouse Project**  
**S.S. #13**  
**Henderson School**  
**By: Member David Thwaites**



## **Background**

It might be said that Section 13 was built from the ashes for its' origins were in the destruction of Section #6 that burned down in September, 1888. With the rebuild of Section #6 the decision was to build a new Section #13 to serve the community. The school was located at 2nd Line NE and 250 Sideroad, Melancthon.

The one room school was built in 1889. The school was of frame construction with flat steel shingles on the roof. The entrance was from the back of the school with windows on each side. The school desks were double-seaters and apparently had been factory built. The cost of the building was six hundred fifty dollars. A porch to cover the entrance doorway would be built six years later.

The first Trustees of the school were John McGrath, Rundle Hunking and John Turner. They would be succeeded in the following years by John Rundle, Robert Oldfield and Robert Marshall, Hugh Acheson and Ben Case. They would be followed by many others including R J Woods, William Dolmer and Bert Henderson through the early 1900s and into the 1920s. By 1945 the Trustees were H Lyon, Clarence Loneway and George Wilson.

The first caretaker was George Wilson who not only provided the necessary property care but also supplied the firewood for the wood heater.

Ms Haney was the first teacher at #13. She would be followed in succeeding years by Miss McBrian, Miss Gertrude Rands and J.A Patillo each of whom was paid a salary of between Two Hundred Forty and Two Hundred Seventy Five Dollars. The list of teachers that followed included Miss Small, Ethel Williams, Miss C Clark, Miss Morrow, Miss Graham, Alex Ferguson, Miss Arthur, Miss Nesbitt, Miss Allen, Miss Fletcher, Miss Switzer, Miss Armstrong, Miss Carson and Miss Duffy through 1914. In 1915 the teacher was Miss Duffy who received Six Hundred Dollars salary. The teachers who followed were Miss Corbett, Hazel Acheson, Miss Gilmore and Walter Greene, the latter receiving a salary of Eleven Hundred Dollars in 1923, before Mr Luxton and Mr Ryan taught in 1924-1925.

The school year originally ran from January through December. Originally the teachers were paid at the end of the school year before that changed in 1907 to quarter yearly.

Through the early years the school was also used as the Methodist Church.

By 1925 the School had apparently been condemned and a new school was necessary. The new school, a modern brick building, was built across the road from the old school, on an acre of land. SS#13 would be known as the Henderson School thereafter as it was built under the direction of Bert Henderson.

The teachers that lead the education of students thereafter included Miss Arnott, Miss Mann, Miss Henderson, Miss Scully, Miss. Murray, Miss Ferguson, Miss Shea and Alex Corbit. By the early 1940s there was a scarcity of teachers, no doubt in part to World War Two. Ms Little was a teacher at the school for approximately five years through 1942 before being followed by Mrs Archie Fisher.

The history records tell us that World War Two had at least ten former students from the school enlisting and serving Canada in the war effort. Eldon Henderon, Bolen Henderon, Eric Ruff, Max Oldfield, Russell Dolmer, Billy Dolmer, Bruce John, Cecil McLaren and Jim Mortimer would all enlist. Jim Mortimer would not return from the War having died as a Prisoner of War in 1944 in Japan.

In preparing this summary of the history of SS#13 we were able to obtain the input of a former student from the late 1950s/early 1960s. Donna Henderson, daughter of Eldon and granddaughter of Bert, attended the Henderson school from 1954-1962 while her three younger brothers would start at the school before moving on to Centennial Hylands, Shelburne in 1967.

Donna shared some of her memories of the school and those who attended. During her years the average enrollment would have been twenty to twenty-five students, Grade 1 – 8. The students all walked to school as there was no bussing. The students would walk to and from school together. For her the underlying memory was the sense of community with the school as the focus. No one was left behind: all were like a large family. Families who attended were active and involved. Christmas concerts were truly a project of the community in which all took pride and spent weeks (months) preparing.

She shared that there was a real sense of inclusion for all that attended, of being accepted and made to be part of the school community. She remembered the winter months during which the students would seek to be closest to the floor register in the centre of the classroom that provided heating. She shared her love of springtime at the school for the smell of the lilacs and snowball flowers. She remembered the water for its smell of sulfur and the challenge of the toilet facilities. She remembered the Grade 8 students being the “teacher’ on the snow days and teacher absent days.

She



remembered, as we talked, some of her fellow students, some of the challenges and some of the special memories. For her the greatest memory of her one room schoolhouse days was the great sense of community, to the value of each and the responsibility.

1966 - 1967

Back row

Linda Lee, Eileen Nealy, Sharon McQuarrie, Keith Whitten,  
Mrs Patterson - teacher, Terry Henderson, Cathy Bang, Marion Nealy,  
Mavis Cameron.

Middle Row

Catherine Jamieson, Larry Keating, Manfred Stennell, Ronald Keating,  
Marjorie Elliott, Marilyn Bang, Bill Whitten, Gordon Nealy,  
Gordie Elliott.

Front Row

Stanley McQuarrie, Doug Ballinger, Peggy ~~Stann~~<sup>Rottan</sup>, Cathy Rowley,  
Mary Honig, Robert Henderson, Connie Marshall, Donna Bates.

Absent - Heather Herbert - Ivan Westcott