



Township of Melancthon
Heritage Advisory Committee
One Room Schoolhouse Project
S.S. #17
Mayburne School
By: Member David Thwaites



Background

Mayburne was and is a hamlet at/near the intersection of what is now County Road 9 and Concession 3 NE, Melancthon, located east of what became Dundalk. The settlers who lived in the greater Mayburne area were largely of British background who undertook mixed farming with, over the years, little to divide the socio-economic makeup of the residents. The names of the original settlers would often find a trail in the school records of students and those involved in the governance of the education system over the many years that followed.

Mayburne would become the location for Section School #17, originally in Grey County but as of 1881 in Dufferin County. Section 17 boundary ran north from the boundary of the north boundary with Section School #13 and extended to the north boundary of Melancthon. The school, when constructed in the mid-1850s was known as Maple Grove but it would be renamed the Mayburne school in 1891, as the name Maple Grove would be ascribed to the new school, SS#5, built in 1891 to the north on Lot 37, Concession 3 N.E. Melancthon.

Section School #17 had its original location on Lot 231, Concession 2 N.E., Melancthon. The log school was built in 1856. The school was approximately 18 feet by 20 feet. The desks were built as long tables with seats on either side while the teacher had her desk and chair. The blackboards were constructed of wooden boards. Quill pens were used by the students for writing. The focus of learning was Reading, Writing and Math. The teacher, in the early years, often had little more formal learning than the students. Corporal discipline was exacted with a beech rod and apparently one teacher used a cane loaded with lead in one end.

The teachers were paid an annual salary starting at \$200 per annum although the salary prior to the late 1800s is unknown. The teacher often boarded with a local family.

In 1891, with the new boundaries for a new SS#17 the school was relocated and built on the eastern corner of Lot 32, Concession 3 NE, a distance east of the original school on the north side of what is now known as County Road 9 and was thereafter known as the Mayburne school. The school had separate cloakrooms for girls and boys, there was a woodstove in the centre of the classroom, there was a baseball diamond out behind the school and an outdoor water pump. The school has long since been removed from the property and replaced by a private dwelling.

There was no central bussing as students would walk or bicycle to and from school. A good ride or walk for many.

The Teacher roll had a regular turnover with few teachers lasting longer than two or three years. Between 1910 and 1932 there were fourteen different teachers. Between 1954 and 1967 there were three teachers, Lilly Goheen, Jean French and Helen Westicott.

The governance of the school was by a local board of three Trustees appointed from amongst the families of the school.

From the 1850s onward the curriculum of the students evolved. By the mid-1930s the subjects taught included music, French, Latin, different math subjects, agriculture and household science. By the 1960s there was a "travelling" music teacher who came weekly to the school and a local minister came in to provide religious instruction. The ability to concentrate was a skill developed by some students given the number of grade levels being taught at any given time and the need to focus on one's own learning. There were Spelling Bees and memory work. There was no school library until into the 1960s when a "travelling library" visited the various schools.

The school day would start with the playing/singing of God Save the Queen and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer before there was a check for the cleanliness of hands, fingernails and that the student's teeth and ears were clean. There was also a check to see that there was a piece of fruit in each lunch box.

Outdoor play, at least in the 1950s and 1960s, included games of tag, baseball, and playing games such as Red Rover and British Bulldog. In the winter students would bring their skates to school and play hockey wherever there was a patch of ice, even in the ditch out front. In better weather (or inside if the weather was bad) marbles and "closest to the wall" hockey card games were played. The activities were generally unsupervised by any adult.

While the school subject curriculum was evolving the amenities of the school did not change a great deal through even into the 1950s. The schoolhouse was painted inside and out in 1947, the outside being a bright red. Hydro was connected in 1950. In 1951 the battery-operated radio was replaced by an electricity-operated radio and in November, 1951 the school was insulated. New toilets were installed in 1954, ie glorified indoor outhouses, although there was no running water or central heating through into the 1960s when the school closed.

There was a woodstove in the centre of the classroom to provide a source of heating and warmth. For one of the students spoken to about their experience even this time

of warming around the woodstove became an important feature as it also was a time when the teacher chose to read a story to the children. For another student she remembers that the school was always kept warm by the caretakers who would arrive early to ensure the school was heated.

Corporal discipline continued throughout the years with the strap being used. A former student shared their recollection of a teacher using a different physical discipline on a student for what might have been considered a very, very modest offence. Needless to say the impression stuck with the student.

There was no education programming available for students who had learning difficulties/challenges and some students were still attending elementary school level (Grade 8) when they were sixteen years of age as "failing" students was the policy and, by the early 1920s, school was compulsory until age sixteen.

The school did provide a focus for the community whether for Christmas concerts or even school sports such as baseball and it was this community mindedness that was remembered by former students as the events were shared by not only the students but the extended families. The Section Schools would play baseball against each other. Two former students commented on the experience and expectation that the students assisted each other in their learning within the school but also for outdoor activities. In springtime, Arbor Day, was celebrated with the school participating in yard cleanup.

Students would generally walk or bicycle to school, which for some amounted to some miles each day.

There was discussion amongst the Section Schools in Melancthon prior to 1967 about consolidating into Area schools (larger than Section schools) but the historical notes indicate opposition to the idea/plan. In the mid-1960s there were some changes that impacted Section School #17. The decision was made to alter how Section School #8 (Shrigley), #13(Henderson) and #17 operated with SS#17 becoming the primary elementary option and SS#13 becoming the senior grade option for the three elementary schools. Bussing was provided for the affected students. In 1967 this choice was also eliminated as all Section Schools in the Province were consolidated. For Melancthon children, the Centennial Hylands Elementary School was opened in Shelburne to serve the greater number of Melancthon children while some children in north Melancthon were compelled to attend the elementary school in Dundalk.

Melancthon SS17-approx 1934.
Found in my Aunt Mildred (Elliott)
Seeley's pics and labelled by Uncle
Bob Elliott.

Back row L to R-Clinton Hurlbut,
Layton Hurlbut, Bill Byers, Jim
Elliott,Oscar Beamish

Middle row-Harvey Marshall,Jack
Elliott,Bob French,Roy Pate,Nellie
Myles,Reta French, Bob Hamilton

Front row-George Marshall,Isaac
Myles, Lily Beamish, Elsie Elliott,
Leona Russell, Bernice Beamish,
Mervin Wilson, Mildred Elliott





1958

Back Row: Ron Jamieson, Gordon Lee, Ken Copeland, Shirley Copeland, Catherine Corbett, Teacher, MRS. JEAN FRENCH.

2nd Row: Carol Dolson, Larry Dolson, Ronnie French, Dennis Jamieson, Larry Jamieson, Bobbie Hurlburt, Brian Pate.

3rd Row: Carole Stewart, Sharon Pate, Maurice Connor, Michael Lukotenkov, Jimmy Copeland, Dennis French.

Front Row: GLEN LEE, BOBBY Copeland, JOHN CONNOR.



MY TEACHER

Mrs Doug Westcott.

June 1964.

Back Row
Ken Elliott, Ivan Westcott, John Lee, Bob Copeland, Michael Logentkow, Estoria Brander, Hugh Elliott, Hester Hurlbut

Middle Row
Kathleen Westcott, Sharon Brander, Lucy Logentkow, Catherine Jamieson, Tom Lee, Cathy Rowley, Craig French, Connie Marshall, Gladys Westcott, Catherine Marshall.

Front Row
Gordon Elliott, Linda Lee, Bonnie Hurlbut, Luise Brander, Brenda Rowley, Carol Nelson, Myrjorie Elliott, Doug Brander.



Grade 3

Teacher
Mrs Westcotte

Back row L-R.
Mrs Westcotte, Ken Elliott, Ivan Westcotte, John Lee
Bob Copland, Michael Lukentinkow, Gloua Brand^{er},
Hugh Elliott, Heather Hurbut.

Centre row L-R.
Kathleen Westcotte, Sharon Brander, Lucy
Lukentinkow, Catherine Jamieson, Tom Lee,
Catherine Rowley, Craig French, Connie
Marshall, Gladys Westcotte, Catherine
Marshall

Front row L-R
Gordon Elliott, Linda Lee, Bonnie Hurbut,
Susan Brander, Brenda Rowley, Carol
Dolson, Marjorie Elliott, Doug Brander

Reference source information for this Section School was obtained from the Museum of Dufferin source archives of School notes for the period through until the late 1950s and also from former students of the 1950s-1960s, Dennis Jamieson, Connie Marshall and Cathy Rowley, with thanks.