



Metcalfe Continuation School - Spring 1929

Back Row: Left to Right: Dorothy Whiteside, Katie McGinnis, Doris Dempsey, Gertie Morrison, Carrie Wynn, Cupie McCullough, Irma Allen, Jean Woods, Sally Hamill, Mary Herbert, Mildred Ralph.
 Next Row: Left to Right: Margaret Byers, Helen Dalglish, Bertha Wallace, Freda Boyd, Greta Morrison, Hazel Bishop, Lois Grey, Isobel Kennedy, Hazel Boyd, Allison Kennedy, Theresa Leahy, Cameron Dunkin (teacher).
 Next Row: Left to Right: Anna Hill (teacher), Gordon Simpson, Leo Casserley, Fred Thompson, Stan Fisher, Bill Morrison, Wilburn Reaney, Fem McMartin, Ethel Grant, Emily Walker
 Front Row: Left to Right: Harold Campbell, Maurice Hughes, Burton Rodney, Wilfred Folkard, Wilmer Byers.

Memories of the Metcalfe Continuation School As Recorded in the Late Wilburn Reaney's Autograph Collection

The late Wilburn Reaney (b.1912, d.1998), son of George Reaney (b.1861, d.1921) and Alberta Waddel (b.1875, d.1948) grew up on the family farm on the North Road (Eighth Line Road) just a couple of miles north of the village of Metcalfe's main intersection. He attended the North Osgoode Public School (S.S.#10) along with his siblings Sadie, Maynard, Norman, Mabel, Ethel and Elva. (This stone schoolhouse, situated a bit north of their homestead, still stands today as a private residence.) Secondary education was then provided at the Metcalfe Continuation School (S.S.#11 Osgoode) which was located on the site where the present-day Metcalfe Public School is situated.)

When he was clearing out some of his uncle's belongings, Wilburn's nephew Ronnie Stuart (son of the late Ethel and Ken Stewart) came across a small leather-bound book entitled "My School Day Autobiography" that had belonged to Wilburn during his studies at the continuation school. The poems and signatures within are dated 1929, 1930, and 1931. Although the pages have yellowed over the years, they are intact, and the neat penmanship remains crisp and clear. The book contains the signatures of Wilburn's classmates and teachers, as well as a number of humorous poems addressed to Wilburn - most complimentary, but some not so admirable. A number of the verses written were popular autographical "standards" of the day; however, others are more creative and personal. Most entries no doubt, were "tongue-in-cheek" expressions of "admiration" intended for the recipient.

The first page of the book bears the publisher's claim that "School day memories bring back pleasant thoughts of happy hours spent in work and play." By reading their inscriptions, this article then is an attempt to bring back some fond memories of those individuals who were classmates of Wilburn Reaney, and to recall memories of the Metcalfe Continuation School itself.

On the "My Teachers" page, Wilburn lists the following MCS staff members: Mr. Duncan, Miss Hamilton, Miss Blakeston and Miss Pratt.

Osgoode Township Historical Society & Museum

at the

Old Vernon School Newsletter

Volume XXXVI No 3 SEPTEMBER 2009



A Tribute to Anna Leighton-Kyle

To the membership of the Osgoode Township Historical Society and Museum,

It is with deep regret that I convey to you the death of Anna Leighton-Kyle, Editor of our quarterly newsletter. In the space of just a few short weeks she succumbed to Cancer.

The obituary announcement read: "Peacefully in hospital after a brief battle with cancer on Tuesday August 11, 2009, at the age of 69 years, loving wife of Larry Kyle, cherished mother of Ian Leighton (Martha Lachance) and Heather Leighton (Eloi Champagne). Step-mother of Curtis Kyle (Margaret), proud grandmother of Maya and Sacha Leighton-Champagne. Dear sister of Gerald Keast and Joan Thunell."

Ann - wife and mother, nurse, care-giver, ever active in the various projects and events in her community, her church, the Women's Institute, the Historical Society - Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, Editor. Ann will be sorely missed by her family and friends, and all those whose lives she touched.

The clock of life is wound but once
 and no man has the power
 to tell just when the hands will stop
 on what day or what hour

Now is the only time you have
 so live it with a will
 don't wait until tomorrow
 the hands may then be still.

Michael Daley

In the shock of Ann's sudden passing, friends and family gathered to share stories of how she has touched our lives, and we marvelled at all the ways in which she contributed to the richness of this community, just through the process of expressing who she was. For some 25 years she has given generously of her time, energy and many talents to the OTHSM, but, as Michael Daley has written, this is only one aspect of her commitment to the people around her.

Among Ann's gifts to us was her ability to make anyone feel instantly at ease and valued because of her own boundless curiosity and respect for others' knowledge and experience. For her, learning was a lifelong pursuit, and there was something she could learn from every situation and every person she met.

She made each task personal. Countless local families have been touched by Ann's work as a caregiver, easing and enriching the latter days of her clients as much with her respect and genuine interest in them as with the nursing care she provided. She listened to their stories and even, in one case, encouraged an ailing gentleman to pick up his long-silent fiddle and play it again for an enthusiastic audience of one. Just imagine how that made him feel!

At the service, Ann's son Ian, having told us about her life, declared that he had always loved her hands. "Prairie hands", he called them, referring to her early days in Viking, Alberta. Not that hers were twisted and swollen or workworn, but that they were strong and creative... and loving.

Ann, we hardly know all the ways we'll miss you.

Patti Mitton

Memories of the Metcalfe Continuation School Cont'd from page 1

The "...Class Mates" pages include these fellow student names: George McEvoy, Earnest Whiteside, Joe Rowan, Clifford Folkard, Neata Morrison, Gladys McKendry, Greta Sheldrick, Jean Daglish, Lola Craig, Mamie Mulvey, Edna Morrison, Margaret Rowan, Myrtle Garret, Walter Rowan, Wilmont Stanley, Wilmer Byers, John Barkley, Jean Woods, Greta Morrison, Gurtie Morrison, Louis Grey, Lillian Scharfe, Emily Walker, Allison Kennedy, Isobel Kennedy, Cupie McCoulough, Erma Allen, Fred Thompson, Leo Casserly, Stanley Fisher, Jimmy Stewart, Stephen Stewart, Burton Rodney, Morris Hughes, Hazel Bishop, Hazel Boyd, Fern McMartin, Helen Daglish, Theresa Leahy, Ethel Grant, Doris Dempsey, Dorothy Whiteside, Margaret Byers and Sarah Hammell.

(Ed.'s note: Some names were misspelled.)

The following are the "poetic quotes" from the book, all addressed to "Dear Wilburn", or to "Dearest William". The reader may only infer what the writer's true feelings concerning their "subject" might have been.

Written in meticulous hand on the inside of the front cover:

Dear Wilburn!
To accommodate your lover,
I'll scribble on the cover.
Theresa

On the very first page:
Dearest Wilburn:-
I hate to go to college
I hate to go to school
But, when it comes to loving (you)
I am an educated fool
Your Vagabond Lover
Cupie

On the second page:
Dearest Wilburn:-
Just a few lines

From a bashful poet
Cupie

On the following pages:
Dear Wilburn:-
Of hot stuff, really you're the limit,
Edna Carson isn't in it -
To think of you sets me aglow
You're the warmest condiment I know
Walter Rowan

(Ed.'s note: Wally Rowan, age 43, a Calgary TCA Station manager at the time, and his wife Yvonne and their two children Susan and Patrick lost their lives in a tragic TCA plane crash on Mount Slesse near Chilliwack, B.C on Dec. 9, 1956. All 62 aboard died instantly when the North Star DC-4M2 exploded on impact with the mountain top. The wreckage, scattered over a wide debris field, was not located until May 12, 1957.)

Round went this book
and here it came
In it for me to write my name
I would write better
If I could
But nature said
I never should
Maynard

Dearest Wilburn
Remember this,
The elevator to success is not by running.
Take the stairs.
Cheerily
Greta Morrison

Dearest Wilburn:
Poor little Wilburn one stormy night
Tried to go up to heaven on the tail of a kite
But the tail it broke and down he fell
And instead of heaven he went to _____
Your kid sister
Ethel Reaney

To Wilburn
When you are sitting all alone,
Reflecting on your life
Remember the school girl
You intended for your wife.
Your brother
Norman

Dear Wilburn:
I've looked these pages o'er and o're,
To see what others have written before
And in this quiet little spot,
I'll plant a sweet forget-me-not
Your enemy
(signature illegible)

When twilight pulls the curtain down,
And pins it with a star,

Memories of the Metcalfe Continuation School
 Cont'd from page 2
 Tho' he be absent far.
 J.C. Stuart
 Your old school pal

 Never make love in a buggy
 Cause horses carry tails
 ..

Remember that you have a friend
 Whose love will always last.
 Walter

 Dear Wilburn:
 When you get married
 And your wife is cross
 Just come over to my place
 ..

Osgoode Township Historical Society and Museum

7814 Lawrence Street,
 P.O. Box 74, Vernon, Ontario
 KOA 3J0
 613-821-4062

Name _____
 Address _____

Do you have a family connection to the former Osgoode Township? Yes _____ No _____
 If yes what is this connection?

Is your Family history kept in the archives research room at the museum? Yes _____ No _____

If No, would you consider donating this information or family artifacts to the Museum / Archives?
 Yes _____ No _____

Have you attended an event at the Museum in the past 12 months? Yes ___ No __

If so, which one(s): _____

How did you hear about the (these) events? _____

Which of the following local newspapers do you read on a regular basis?
 Winchester Press ___ the Review/Advance ___ Manotick Messenger ___
 Russell Villager ___ Other: _____

In your opinion what events, exhibits, and activities do you enjoy most?

What types of new exhibits, events or activities would you like to see at the museum?

What types of activities, events or exhibits do you not enjoy and why?

How can we improve to make things better?

Memories of the Metcalfe Continuation School Cont'd from page 3

reason at the time, Jean had not signed Wilburn's autograph book.). After Jean's passing, Wilburn later married Edna Weedmark (nee Trick) of Carleton Place (b.1924, d. 2005).

In closing, I'll sign off with a note similar to one that was written in my 1959 North Middlesex District High School (Parkhill, Ont.) yearbook (Yearbooks seem to have replaced the older style school autograph albums,)

Yours "Till Niagara Falls"
Ron Isaac,
OTHS&M Director

A ONE LINER: DID YOU KNOW THAT AN "IRISH MAN," CAN TELL ONE, "TO GO TO HELL," IN SUCH A WAY, "S'URN BE'GORE," THAT THEY ARE ACTUALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TRIP!

Irish Census Information Online

In 1901 and 1911, enumerators (mostly local constables) gathered census information in Ireland as did their counterparts in other countries of the British Empire. Recently, the National Archives of Ireland joined forces with Library and Archives Canada and a company in India to transcribe, digitize and index these returns and make them accessible online. For 1911, these records represent approximately 4,000,000 individuals, and a significant number of the returns are already online, with the rest to follow shortly. Data and images from the 1901 returns should be available by the end of 2009.

The website also includes photographs and extensive historical and sociological background information that provide a rich and fascinating context for the census material
<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>.

I am fortunate to be involved in this massive undertaking, reviewing for accuracy and offering suggestions to improve the process. Some observations: mixed marriages were more common and literacy rates considerably higher than I had expected. In one household, there were only two residents, a mother and daughter, both widowed and both literate. The younger woman was 72, but it was her mother, aged 100, who signed the return as the head of household! Feisty?

There were also fewer large families than I anticipated. Perhaps the reason for this can be found in the columns that record the number of children born to each woman, and the number of these children still living. Sadly they are often different. It's not clear to me though, why the British Government chose to gather this information, and what policies, if any, were based on it.

My subjective impression, although I don't have statistics to prove it, is that there were not as many individuals between the ages of 65 and 85 as one might expect. If this is accurate, then it may be related to high mortality and emigration rates for those who were young in the 1830s through 1850s, i.e. when poverty, disease and the potato famine

significantly reduced and scattered the Irish population.

Among the occupations listed were some that rarely if ever occur today: weaver, milliner, governess, butler, coachman, coach painter, lithographic printer, commercial traveller, slater and plasterer, railway shunter, telegraphist and, a personal favourite, telegraph tower guard (three men were assigned to share this duty on the west coast of Sligo).

Perhaps because many heads of households filled out their own forms, there is a freedom of thought, not to say a rebellious spirit, expressed in Irish census returns that doesn't appear in those of other countries, where enumerators soberly entered all the information. For instance, some wrote entirely in Gaelic. Occasionally, the notation was simply "Information refused". In the column headed "Religious Profession", one man wrote "Sees good in all creeds, but does not belong to any one of them".

Maybe you think your ancestors left Ireland so long ago that these relatively recent returns couldn't possibly be relevant to your family research? So did I. But then I found James Mitton (James is a name that recurs frequently in our branch of the family). He was a Quaker aged 57 in 1911, living in Belfast, in Shankill, a primarily Protestant area familiar to us now because of bitter sectarian conflict that erupted there during the Troubles of the 1980s and 90s.

My great-great-grandfather is said to have been killed in Belfast for having married 'across religious lines'. Subsequently his widow and children emigrated to America around 1856. Our oral tradition also includes obscure references to Quakers. Could this James, born about 1854, have been my great-grandfather's cousin? A brother who returned to Ireland or was left behind to be raised by other family members? Hmmm, I wonder....

Patti Mitton



Attention Veterans of Osgoode Township

The Osgoode Township Historical Society and Museum, in partnership with the Nepean museum and Scotiabank, is proud to announce a program to recognize the service and sacrifice of all Osgoode Township Veterans. Every Veteran registering in the program will receive an all-weather metal plaque to commemorate their services to Canada. To participate any Veteran who is a resident (or was a former resident of Osgoode Township) need only register through a mailing to arrive soon from the Osgoode Township Historical Society. Veterans may also register in person at either of the two locations listed below or online:

-Osgoode Township Historical Society and Museum, at 7814 Lawrence St., Vernon Ontario

-Nepean Museum at 16 Rowley Avenue. On-line registration is available at the Nepean Museum www.nepeanmuseum.on.ca

A recognition ceremony is to be held on Saturday, September 26th at 2:00 pm at the Metcalfe Lion's Club, Lion's Den at the Metcalfe Fair grounds.

Please join the executive of the Osgoode Township Historical Society, local dignitaries, officials from Scotiabank and the members of the Royal Canadian Legion on this occasion to honour our veterans. Plaques will be issued to all veterans that have registered for this program.

A reception will follow.

There is no charge for the Recognition Plaques and the reception to honour our Osgoode Township Veterans. For more information about this program, please contact the Osgoode Township Historical Society Museum at (613) 821-4062

Scotiabank

Involved in the community with pride.



What's in a Name?

In regards to the controversial name for the French Immersion School, Lot 20 Con. 5, Osgoode Twp.

The name Snake Island (School) Centre is a befitting tribute, a commemorative plaque to the pioneer families, and a continuity with the past history of Osgoode Township. It is hoped that this brief documentary of facts and events and personalities will arouse interest and pride in the hearts of this generation, and of those to follow, and that it will stimulate a consciousness of our early history.

The drama of struggle, sadness, joy and pride encompassing the lives of the newly arrived settlers and pioneers staggers the imagination. One realizes these early immigrants from Ireland were a hardy folk, and hardy they had to be! They knew the realities of suffering hunger and illness, and even death. Along with other pioneers, they helped to open

up this Township, and gave us the safe and happy environment in which we live. Our own descendants can live in peace and freedom because people of strength and courage took a chance on a new land. They followed their dream, and, in so doing, helped to make our dreams come true.

Archibald McDonnell, according to the inscription on his tombstone in St. Catherine's cemetery in Metcalfe, was the first settler to come into Osgoode with his family (1827-1828). The tombstone of William York in the Methodist cemetery in Metcalfe states that he was the first settler in the township!

The 1842 census shows a population of 1279 inhabitants, by 1861 this figure had increased to 4,332, and by 1863 there were five Irish families settled on Lots in what became known as Snake Island. This name was given because of the large population of snakes of various sizes, some measuring five feet in length and twelve inches in circumference. Strange to say, the Irish had not been long in the area before the snakes took their leave. On Concession 4, there were: D. O'Connor - Lot 20, T. Deverix - Lot 21, J. Mantle - Lot 22. On Concession 5, there were: Thos. Canglely - Lot 22, Rev. Thos. Boyle and his family (father or brother) - Lot 20, and William Otto and J. Bradley - Lot 19. By 1879 the population of Snake Island had increased considerably with names such as Minogue, Coleman, Dooley, Herbert, Leahy, McMahon, Brennan, Keough, Tobin, Shea, McEvoy and McCabe, all from Ireland. Two other families also settled here, the Gray and Duncan families.

The area was covered with water and wild grasses and marshy hay. In the early 1860's a tragedy struck the area. A story is told of a poor family living in the settlement by the name of John and Sally _____. "They kept a cow. John, knowing that winter was coming on, and not wanting the cow to go hungry, decided to cut some of the marsh hay to feed the cow over the winter. He sharpened his scythe, got his lunch, old clay pipe and tobacco, and off he went to the meadow. He looked over the field and picked out the best spot, as he thought, and set to work. He had not been long mowing when one of those big black snakes bit him on the leg. Luckily there was a man passing by who came to his aid and bound up his wounds, but John died of the snake bite." There were some verses gotten up about this fatality but I will not include them here.

My Great Grandmother, Mary (Downs) Leahy, from County Down, Ireland, told that when they settled in the Island (Lot 24, Con 4) in 1845, they used to light pine torches to drive the wild-cats from the roof of their log cabin.

In 1867, Patrick Herbert, son of my Great, Great Grandparents - Patrick and Bridget

Herbert (Lot 15, Con 3) received from his father the Deed for the West half of Lot 23, Con 5. 100 acres in Snake Island. On July 10th, 1876, Patrick Jr. and his wife Ann McKay donated one acre of land on the N. West corner of Lot 23, Con 5, for \$1.00 to the trustees of School Section No. 14, for the erection of a new English public school. The agreement was signed by John Tobin, John Coleman, and Patrick McCabe, in the presence of Thomas Deverix. The building was erected of logs, approximately 22 by 26 feet in dimensions with two windows on each side. In later years an addition was made to the school making it approximately 40 feet in length. This building is now a residential home, but still retains the image of its past.

No religion was taught in this school because some of the students were Protestant, despite the fact that the teachers were Irish Roman Catholics by descent and could teach religion. Children were instructed in their homes in religion.

Around 1918-19, French families from Embrum, St. Therese, Sarsfield and Rockland came into the area and bought up the farms that the Irish families had spent a lifetime clearing and draining. Mr. Joseph Doaust was one of the first, with a family of eight boys and four girls. He was followed by other French families until there was only one Irish family left - John Devereaux. Today his son Frank and family still reside on the homestead that was carved out of the wilderness of Ontario.

In the early 1920's, the French ratepayers bought the school and land from the Public School Board. It then became R.C.S.S. No. 14, and for many years, as many as fifty students were in attendance. In 1960, St. Catherine's School in Metcalfe was built, and in 1966, R.C.S.S. No. 14 School Board was dissolved when a majority of French ratepayers and tenants voted to support St. Catherine's English Catholic School and have their children educated there.

For ninety years this little schoolhouse served the needs of the community, but like the closing of a book, the era of the one-room schoolhouse in Snake Island was no more.

Ironic isn't it, that once again, one hundred and ten years later, that a rate payer, Mr. Norman Fenn of Con. 5, Lot 20, has donated a parcel of land for the erection of a building to further the education of our youth?

Michael Daley

Just a line...

Members Fred Alexander, Ron Isac, Ken McDiarmid, Cecil Reaney, manned a display of farm implement's at the, "Ottawa Carleton Plowing-match August 15," on Spratt Road.

Volunteer Corner

- √ Volunteer Kelly Fekete has been working on identifying previously unidentified photos
- √ Lori Erling is researching quilts and has documented a signature quilt in the collection.

Ongoing opportunities:

- research
- programming assistance
- newsletter editing/submissions
- board of directors



Director Ron Isaac on a classic tractor, Pioneer Day 2006.
Watch for our Pioneer Days Round-Up in the December Newsletter.



O.T.H.S gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa

OSGOODE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Published quarterly at the Museum in Vernon.
Objective is to promote, preserve and publicize history in the Township of Osgoode and to foster genealogical research. Museum & archives are free admission. Open Tues to Sat. 9:00 to 5:00
Circulation - 220 Membership \$15.00 yearly
Editor & Typesetter : Admin
Membership: Admin
e-mail at oths@magma.ca
Mailing Address: 7814 Lawrence Street, Box 74,
Vernon, Ont K0A 3J0
Tel: (613) 821-4062 E-mail: oths@magma.ca
Website: www.magma.ca/~oths