

230 John St.

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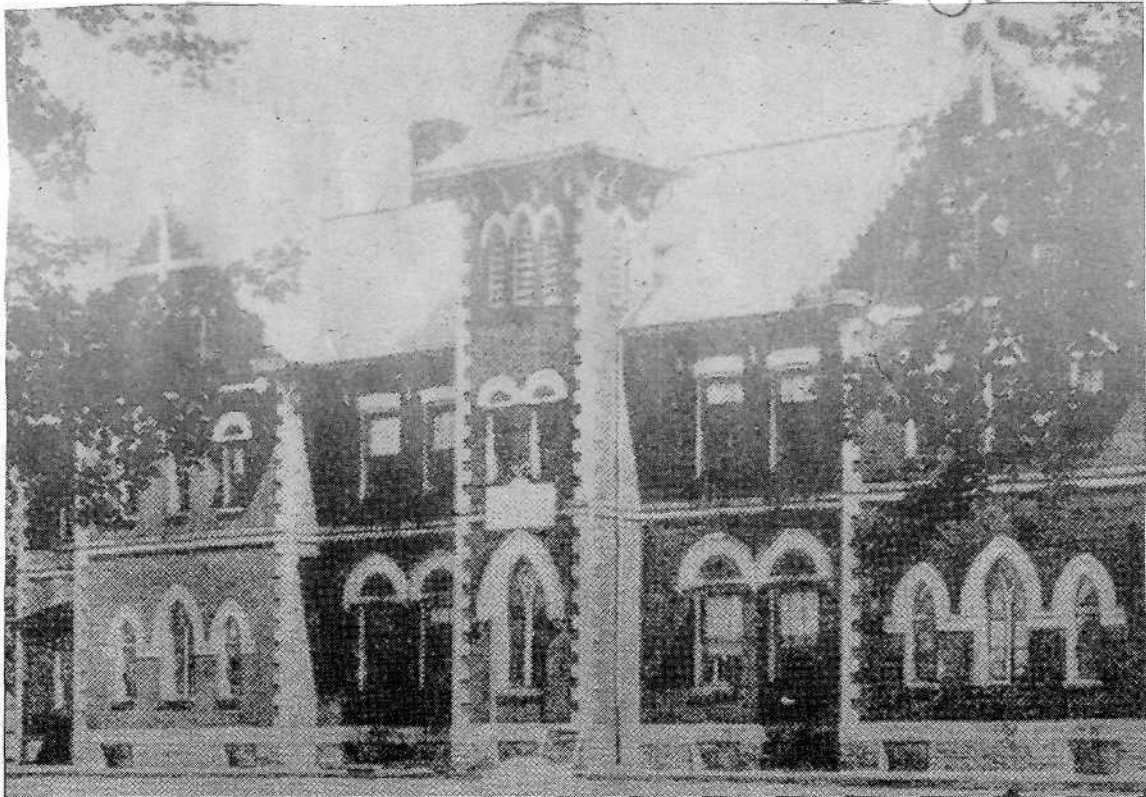


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Belleville High School

School days, school days

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STORY BY BENZIE SANGMA FOR THE INTELLIGENCER

Sports were held outside for lack of indoor facilities in the school. The church next door had a tennis court, she noted, for the ones who could afford tennis rackets. As for herself, she could hardly afford the bus ride home which cost her 15 cents to get to Yeoman Street, which was still far from her home in the middle of the farmlands, west side of Belleville. In winter, she occasionally got rides on horse sleighs belonging to other students in the neighbourhood. At all other times, she walked for about three-quarters of an hour to get to the school.

The decorum at the high school dictated that both the students and the teachers address each other by their last names. That lasted for a while before the students were allowed to use first names.

"The teachers still had to be addressed by their last names with a Miss, Mrs. or Mr. before them. We had a teacher and her brother was in our class and she made him call her Miss. She gave him detention because he wouldn't call her Miss. She used to keep him (in detention) time after time after time because he would not call her Miss. He kept insisting that she was his sister and her name was Marjorie," she remembered.

As do most memories of good, old and carefree school days, hers were abundant of pranks played on teachers. She has her all-time favourite memory.

"In winter, the school used steam generators to heat up the classrooms. We had a math teacher. One

day, he hung his jacket and they filled the pockets with cheese. The steam heater was right behind his jacket and after a while the cheese melted and we didn't squeal," she guffawed remembering the plight of her teacher.

At another time, she recalled students letting out the tap water in the two classes in the YMCA building, which used to be located downtown.

"The place was a wild mess. It was thoroughly flooded and I remember even the police attending the event," she said.

Although she said she never received punishment with a strap, she did remember seeing other students were sent to the principal's office for "the whacks". The merry expression on her face dimmed slightly at one unpleasant memory.

"We had a teacher who taught us French and she was the most cruel teacher. One day, she sent up my brother to the board to write something and he didn't do it right and you know what she said. She said, if you're not so big I would push you right out through that wall. She was so mean that he quit that very first year."

She herself stayed on till she graduated out of the high school at the grand old age of 14.

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