

COBOURG SCHOOLS

Historical sketch of Cobourg's Early (Schools) Educational Institutions.
(From the Cobourg World, Friday April 28, 1911. Page 7 : 2.)

From an important educational work, "Schools and Colleges in Ontario, 1793-1910," by J. George Hodgins, ex-Deputy Minister of Education and Historiographer to the Educational Department of Ontario, kindly loaned to us by Principal Arthur of the Cobourg Collegiate Institute, we have culled some interesting data, relative to the schools and colleges of Cobourg. The first of these articles is published in The World this week in the hope that those of our older residents who can, will supplement the meagre information given here by additional data relative to Cobourg's early educational advantages. The World will be pleased to give publicity to any information received on this subject, as our educational history on record is very meagre, and much could and ought to be done along this line.

THE EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN COBOURG.

Dr. Hodgins says :--

"In 1816 the Parliament of Upper Canada made the first provision for Public Education by appropriating \$6,000. to aid in paying teachers and buying school books. But it was many years before the inhabitants generally could afford to pay the fees charged and give their children even the meagre advantages of the Grammar school system, the only system then authorized by the Legislature. The wealthier people of the District sent their children, both boys and girls to private seminaries in Toronto; while those who were of moderate circumstances, patronized the private schools which sprang up in the pioneer settlements.

"Before 1830, a large frame building stood immediately south of the Division Street Methodist church. It was used as a school house, a church, and also for holding public meetings. Mr. Merrick sawyer was the teacher. Each pupil had to pay for tuition, the fee varying from five shillings to eight shillings per quarter, according to the subject taken by the pupil.

"Prior to 1832, Mr. E.C.Hull taught a private school in a frame building at Hulls's Corners.

"About the same date, Mr. Andrew Jeffrey, afterwards member of parliament, kept a private school on the north side of King street, East, both girls and boys attended this school.

"There was also a private school in a frame building on a King Street lot where Mr. Cunningham taught for many years.

"Before 1840 on the premise on the corner of King and Church Streets, Mr. and Mrs. Borradaile taught a school.

"For several years prior to this time, a frame building on Ontario Street was used as a common school. This school was distinguished for its possession of a bell.

"Several years after this school had been closed, Mr. Raymond opened a private school on William Street. Another private school was opened in a house on King Street. The school room was also used as a place of worship on Sundays.

"Perhaps the most important Elementary School in Cobourg was the Parrocial School founded by the Anglican Church authorities. It was a large barn-like building which formerly stood midway between King and Queen Streets on the old Collegiate grounds. This school was opened before 1830, and an Irishman named Mr. Ovens was one of its first teachers.

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"About 1830, Mr. McLaren, a Scotchman, taught a small private school. He subsequently moved into a frame house on Albert Street. This teacher used to walk up and down in the school room, strap in hand, and to encourage them in their studies he would call out, "Now pull ahead boys ! Pull ahead !" For this reason he was popularly known as "old pullahead."

"For several years previous to 1837, Mr. Pomeroy had a private school near the corner of James and Division Streets. At the same time Mr. Hudspeth also kept a private school on Division Street, and afterwards moved into another building almost opposite St. Peter's Rectory.

"In 1841, Mr. Redmond opened a private school on Spring Street. The late Chief Justice Thomas Moss and the present Chief Justice Charles Moss were two of his distinguished pupils. Mr. Redmond afterwards moved to Ball Street, where he taught the district school for many years.

"Previous to 1850, there was a private school kept in a building which stood near the corner of Division and Swayne Streets. Mr. Ratcliffe taught there. This school was also taught by Mr. Bothwell.

"In the early forties there were two most excellent ladies schools kept in Cobourg by Mrs. Vannerman, (wife of Rev. Professor Vannerman, M.A.) and by Mrs. Hurlburt, (wife of Rev. Jesse Hurlburt, M.A.). Both of these Reverend gentlemen were professors in Victoria College, at which the editor of this volume attended in 1840, to 1844 when he became Rev. Dr. Ryerson's assistant in the Education Department of Ontario.

Besides the old Parochial school mentioned by Dr. Hodkins there was a Divinity School which was conducted for years in connection with St. Peter's Church. Many of the older clergy of the Church of England in Ontario were educated there. The building is now the residence of Mrs. Haskell.

Subsequent articles will deal with the history of Cobourg Collegiate Institute, Cobourg Public Schools and old Victoria University.

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THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF COBOURG.

(Continued from our issue of April 28th)

The first common school section in Cobourg was formed in the neighbourhood of the old Court House and the first teacher of whom we have any record was named Hamilton. Other teachers in this school noted in their day were Messers Patterson and David Johnston. The old common school house was erected by the district ratepayers on land donated for the purpose by the Burnham family. This was the only school house in the Corporation actually owned by the people. There were four other Common Schools open at the time, but they were all in rented premises.

The second school section included the Ball-Street neighbourhood. Its school house was a small building on that street.

School section number three had for its centre John and Chapel Streets, and this school was first started in a private house occupied by Mr. N. Wilson, who taught it.

School section number four had Queen Street for its centre. The building popularly known as "the Cork Town School" was originally rented from the authorities of the Church of England who had used it as a Theological Seminary. Mr. Good was its first teacher. He was followed by Dr. Down.

School section number five had for its centre the frame building on King Street.

These schools were opened at different times before 1846. They were not as at present, under the direction of a Public School Board; each

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district or section elected three trustees to look after its own school. The teachers were paid partly by local and Government grants, but principally by the pupils, who were required to pay quarterly fees for their tuition. The more pupils the teacher could secure the greater was his salary. There was no provision made for inspection, and the teacher did not require any special qualifications.

The first minutes of the Public School Board dated the 15th of November, 1847, show that the first Board was composed as follows,-- Messers Asa A. Burnham, Chairman; A. Milne, T. Scott, George Stephans, J.B. Boswell, O.W. Powell and H.J. Ruttan, the latter acting as secretary.

In 1848, Mr. David Brodie was appointed Superintendent of the schools at a salary of ten pounds per annum.

The teachers appointed were -- No. 1., Mr. Hamilton; No. 2, Mr. Redmond; No. 3, Mr. N. Wilson; No. 4, Mr. Kingman. Each teacher was allowed fifty pounds per annum, exclusive of the rate, according to the number of scholars taught by him. In those early days the pupils were supplied with free text books, recommended by the Chief Superintendent of Education.

In 1850, the Board was composed of Rev. Doctor Bethune, Chairman; John Beatty, M.D.; Messers Thomas Eyre, Asa A. Burnham, John Richardson, and John Kennedy. Dr. Beatty was appointed secretary which position he held for many years.

On Oct. 27, 1852, Captain Hayter, formerly of the Royal Navy, was appointed Superintendent of the Common Schools. Mr. Robertson was engaged to teach singing to the children at a salary of fifty pounds per annum. Captain Hayter was an Attache of the British Consulate at Caen, under the Consul, popularly known as "beau Brummel". Captain Hayter also taught French in Victoria College.

In 1855, a male teacher's salary was 100 pounds per annum.

The Archdeacon of York (Doctor Bethune) requested to be allowed the privilege of imparting religious instruction in the schools. After exciting a bitter sectarian controversy the subject was dropped.

In 1856, the first lady teacher, Miss Stickles, was engaged by the School Board. She was appointed Principal of the Court House school at a salary of 70 Pounds.

In 1857, Rev. J.W. Bredin was elected Chairman of the Board. During the following year Rev. Father Timlin sent a formal notice to the Board stating that the Roman Catholics intended to establish and support a Separate School in Cobourg.

Dr. Beatty resigned as Secretary of the Board in 1858 and Dr. N.W. Powell was elected to the position, which he held until 1890, when the present Secretary, Mr. Alexander Poe was appointed.

In 1862, the Parochial (Queen Street) School was purchased by the School Board for \$6,000. and a ground rental of \$20. per year. This was the second school building owned by the Board.

In 1870, a new school site was purchased from Mr. David Ross and Mr. Lauder, Bagot Street School was built on this lot and opened in 1872 with Mr. D. Johnston as principal.

In 1874 the site of the Central School on University Avenue was purchased from Rev. Isaac B. Howard for \$1,200. The new school house was erected at a cost of \$4,300. It was a County Model School from 1875 until 1897. Following have successively occupied the position of its Principal, Messers Dorland, W.E. Sprague, W.F. McDermid, A. Barber, W.J. Hamilton and J. Burchill, M.A.

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The Separate School at Cobourg.

The Separate School at Cobourg was first established in 1857. It was then held in a small frame building 36 feet by 22 feet. with one teacher and was situated on Ball Street. In 1860, a lot was purchased adjoining it, and the school continued there until 1869, when a brick school house of two storéys was erected, and two teachers employed in the school. This continued until 1883 when the property was sold and a new school site was purchased on University Avenue, in the central portion of the town. In September of that year the Sisters of St. Joseph from Toronto took charge at the school, with a staff of four teachers. In 1890 various improvements were made in the school to bring the school classes into a graded form. In 1903 the school was enlarged by an addition of 30 feet by 35 feet and all modern conveniences place in it.

The Cobourg Grammar School.

Sometime previous to the year 1836, a Grammar School for the District of Newcastle, called the Cobourg Grammar School, was built on the spot where the old Collegiate Institute building stood. The first principal, so far as is learned, was Mr. Walter c. Crofton of Trinity College, Dublin. The next was a Mr. Robert Hudspeth (former Classical Master of the Upper Canada Academy, Cobourg) of the University of Edinburgh, and after him, Mr. F.W. Barron, who was formerly Principal of Upper Canada College.

Public School Inspectors and Chairmen

In 1871 the late Rev. Dr. Laing was appointed Inspector of Schools. He held the position for one year when the late Mr. E. Scarlett was appointed. He remained in office until 1895, and was succeeded by the present Inspector, Mr. Albert Odell.

The late Mr. P. McCallum, the late Mr. C.C. Field and the late Mr. John Daintry each filled in turn the position of Chairman of the Board. Mr. Thomas Gillbard was chairman for the first time in 1869, and was re-elected repeatedly, serving for mor than forty years.

Mr. E.H. Osler is the present esteemed chairman.

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HISTORICAL ARTICLE.

Mr. J. Burchill, formerly of Cobourg, now principal of the Smiths Falls Public Schools, contributed an article on elementary education in Cobourg and vicinity, which was read at a meeting of the Cobourg Historical Society about ten years ago, and has offered to kindly allow The World the use of the original manuscript for publication to supplement the series now being printed on the early schools of Cobourg. Mr. Burchill's article will appear at a later date.