

## South Monaghan Municipal Hall

### The End of an Era

No more will the pound of the gavel or the tapping of dancing feet, or the voices of our local talent in song and recitation be heard, as the end of an Era has been brought about by the sale of the South Monaghan Municipal Hall. The Hall was moved to its present location in the late 1800's and has been used to conduct the affairs of the South Monaghan Council until the recent acquisition of the old Doctor's residence at Bailieboro with subsequent renovations resulting in a new combination municipal building and library facilities.

Until recent years, local couples (newly married, or soon to be married) were honored by the community in this hall, by the presentation of gifts, accompanied by a programme of singing, dancing, jokes and recitations. Lunch and dancing until the wee hours followed: a custom which is now sadly missed in the community.

Well remembered in the war years, were the victory bond drives, blood donor's clinics, etc. and that feeling of pride when our returned servicemen were honored at a dance and presentation of a wallet and money. (1945).

The Women's Institute held their community euchre's there for many years. Back in the 1940's these euchres were always followed by a dance, with music by our local musicians.

Many lively nomination meetings were held over the years.

Older residents will remember a very large fall fair held in the hall and in the field behind. Livestock was shown and horse races were run. Every kind of farm produce and ladies handicraft were shown and competition was keen. The hall was then known as the "Agricultural Hall". One of our older residents recalls a certain gentleman who's job it was to walk around the hall with a stick, which he used to tap little fingers that might find some of the produce appetizing. In the 40's an annual school fair was held, with public school children competing with produce and animals (pets).

Over the years, many talented people performed on the stage of the Township Hall, but a few of the enduring ones who were willing to share their talents year after year were - Mack Bradshaw, with song and guitar, also Clarence Eagleson who gave us many entertaining moments with his home-spun songs and wit and his guitar genius. Mrs. Wilbert (Jean) Smith and Mrs. Lawrence (Hazel) Larmer entertained us with amusing readings over the years. Reg. Atchison donated his time and violin talents at many a dance, as well as the Jim Wood family, on piano, guitar and Jim on violin. In the 30's Red Moncrief and his Haymakers provided some lively music for the local dancing crowd. In the early 40's a local band was formed for the enjoyment and entertainment of the community, calling themselves the "Sodbusters". We will always remember Mut Wood on the spoons. In the middle 40's a teenage band was formed, and dubbed themselves "The Junior Sodbusters". They entertained at the hall many times. Two local quartettes provided much enjoyment over the years, in the 40's they were Jake Isbister, Mr. and Mrs. O.B. Johnson, and Miss Flossie MacIndoo. In the 50's a new quartette was formed and provided many entertaining moments. It consisted of Art Beebe, Eldridge White, Harland Seens, and Harold Buckham. They called themselves "The Common-Aires". "How Art loved those low, low, notes". In previous years, Harland Seens and Eldridge White entertained us with many a duet. We must not forget one of our local gentleman who loved to square dance and always performed a step dance for the entertainment of the dancers, as well as his own complete enjoyment. We will never forget Billy Elmer.

One of the more popular Master of Ceremonies during the 1940 decade, was Harry Campbell, Reeve of South Monaghan Township and Warden of Northumberland and Durham Counties in 1952. His love of home and family could only be compared to his love of his township. How many times we have heard Harry, while speaking in the township hall, refer to South Monaghan Township as "The Garden of Eden", always pronouncing Monaghan in the old Irish manner.

In the 1920's and early 30's Agricultural Short Courses were held during the winter months. These were attended by many of the young people in the community, and it is said that many romances blossomed at these gatherings.

Several generations will remember with nostalgia, the good times enjoyed with neighbours and friends at the South Monaghan Community Hall. Yes! the walls of that old hall will always echo with the happy memories of by-gone days.