

# History of Cartwright Schools<sup>1953</sup> Which Goes Back 150 Years Covers Four Interesting Periods

(Blackstock Correspondent)

A well attended meeting of Blackstock Women's Institute was held Feb. 2nd. The speaker on this occasion was Mrs. Ivan Thompson, who before her marriage was Gwendyth Marlow and she taught school for several years. She was therefore well qualified to give a most interesting and entertaining historical research address on the importance and significance of Cartwright schools which history goes back over 150 years. In order that this generation is made familiar with the wonderful strides in our local school system back to the earliest pioneer days we would suggest that present school teachers in Cartwright devote a period to having this address read to their pupils. We feel sure that adults would also enjoy reading this historical address which follows:

## The Foundation Line

If we were to go on a tour in New York or indeed in any large city, we would be filled with wonder as the guide pointed out the height of the various buildings and told us how long it took to build each one. Just as we would become completely obsessed with the sky-line the guide might tell us of another line, not seen and seldom considered—the foundation line. He could tell us how far down the engineers had to go to lay a firm foundation, and then we would begin to realize that before we can build up we must build down and that the further we build down the higher we can build up.

Here we are today, the adults of this generation, confronted with the task of building our community and our world into the kind of place we want it to be. If we are to start at the foundation and build a firm foundation does that not mean that we must start with our children? No one can be entirely indifferent to the processes whereby young children learn as they grow to feel, to think, to behave, and to act. Our schools together with the other two essential institutions in our society, the home and the church are directly responsible for the education of our youth.

When I was asked to prepare something for this February meeting Mrs. Dorrell said that although the theme of the meeting was Current Events I need not use that as a topic. But as I thought back over 1954 it seemed to me that one of the highlights of the past year, especially to those of us who have school age and pre school aged children was the opening of our new Public School, and as I thought of the school I began to be interested in finding out how education and our schools have progressed in Ontario and especially in Cartwright since the first settlers arrived here.

Our educational system has evolved very slowly over the years. Its development over the past 150 years falls conveniently into four periods:

**Foundation Period, 1800-1840.**  
**Period of Expansion 1840-1870**  
**Period of Consolidation, 1870-19th Century.**

know that the first settlers came in 1834 and at the time of the first burial in 1938 all the adult male population was present—nine in number; so it is not likely that with such a small population anything had been done about a school.

However about 1845 it is thought that a school, no more than a log shanty it is called was erected on what is now Gordon Strong's farm, bought from the Smith Bros. It was then the farm of James Emerson who was the teacher. Later a bigger and better log building was built on the Ira Argue farm. This log school served until the frame building that has been used until this last year was erected. Some records state that this was about 1869 but Mr. Jim Larmer, now 85, remembers that he went three days to the old log school and then to the new one.

In 1840 in the Cedardale Section there was a pine log building erected on what is now Allan Suggitt's farm. This served as school and Church, and about this same time there was a log school building on the corner of what is now Balfour Moore's property.

## Period of Expansion

About this time the population began to increase rapidly. Transportation and communication were greatly improved. Reading became more popular. The man of the hour was Egerton Ryerson. He was Superintendent of Education from 1844 to 1875 and was responsible, despite much opposition and criticism, for fashioning and constructing our Ontario School System. He set up a Central Authority to prepare regulations and draw up a course of study for the whole province. He enforced the use of a single set of text books and controlled the qualifications of the teacher.

At the same time he left to local boards the hiring of the teacher and maintenance of the school. By 1850 he had obtained a Normal School and some degree of supervision over the teachers. During the twenty years that followed he persuaded by means of driving up and down country roads and having many a door slammed in his face, 4000 of 4400 school sections to finance education entirely out of local taxes and thus provide Free Schools.

I found in the minutes of the annual meeting of School Section No. 7 (Caesarea) held on January 12, 1870: Quote: "Moved by James Parr seconded by John Elliott that this be a free school for the current year". Carried.

Although I wasn't able to obtain any record of meetings before that date on the financial statement of 1868, an amount was shown to have been received from the township clerk. However the free school seems to have been something that had to be passed every year as it appears again in the minutes of that annual meeting in 1871.

The teacher at this time was paid \$200.00 yearly and the caretaker first 60c then 80c and later up to \$1.00 per month for sweeping and lighting fires. Every year for several years there is an expenditure of \$1.00 to a Mrs. Blakely for washing

by the department.

The introduction of a new program of studies in 1937-38 was the most revolutionary revision that had taken place in our educational system.

I feel that it would be unfair to mention anything further about this period as next month we are going to have a debate about the controversy we hear so much about these days—the benefit to the pupils of the traditional education of 25 years ago against the progressive methods used today.

## Everybody's Business

Education is everybody's business. In our society we all go to school and later most of us have children in whose education we are interested. We nearly all have an opinion on education. Sometimes persons who have little knowledge of the subject make strong and sweeping statements about what the school should do, but experienced educators and thoughtful parents are usually more cautious. They realize that it is difficult to apply any one theory or one practice under all circumstances and to all young people. They are willing to study the views of others with an open mind. For example uninformed persons may say: "Freedom is folly — children should be disciplined — discipline depraves—children should be free."

Both are at the same time right and wrong. A thoughtful person will search for the formula that will reduce the error and enlarge the truth of both statements.

## Public School Exams In Hoop Skirt Age

A former resident of Cartwright Mr. P. C. Edgerton, lately resident in The Statesman Block, when going through some of his old-time papers, came across some exam. questions he wrote in the public school, March 29, 1888. They were evidently promotion tests, Sr. III to Jr. IV prior to these small chaps leaving school to help in farm work.

These faded documents were printed much as they are today and as a matter of comparison with today's exams, we quote a few of the questions posed then for the girls in gingham and boys wearing boots with copper toes.

### Geography

1. Explain the terms, Tropic, Inlet, Isthmus, Beach.
2. Outline the coast of South America from Panama to Cape Horn, showing capes, rivers, etc., neatly printed in their proper places.
5. Describe a coasting journey from Collingwood to Hamilton, naming waters passed through.
6. Why does the sun appear to rise in the east?

### Arithmetic

1. Take 9,999 inches from 99 miles. Give ans. in inches.
2. How many seconds are there from 24 min. past 6 in the morning until 15 min. 45 secs. past 4 p.m.?
3. A person owns 3/8 of a ship and sells 2/3 of his share for \$1,260. What is the value?
8. Reduce 130,757 inches to miles and from the result subtract 1 m. 3 fur. 23 per. 1 yd. 11 in.

### Grammar

1. Write 4 sentences, one of each kind (viz. declarative, interrogative, etc.) using the following words as verbs: crow, smoke, dust, cane.
  2. Analyse: (a) Long before daylight the busy little fellow was at his lessons. (b) Around his chair in sympathetic mirth, its tricks the kitten tries.
  5. Write a composition of at least 12 lines on "Canadian Trees" or "Tobogganing."
- Value of each answer 10; time 1½ hours.

## ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

Results of the examinations for entrance to High Schools and Collegiate Institutes at Bowmanville and Blackstock are given below. Total number of marks obtainable was 650; necessary to pass 390. Thirteen failed to pass at each place, mostly boys. The successful ones are:

### BLACKSTOCK,

Roy Wright	482	Miss Hawkins
Viola Trewin	481	Miss Davidson
Elma Hooley	452	J. J. McDonald
Lyda Forder	436	J. Vanderburgh
Annie Ferguson	431	Miss Davidson
Stanley Malcolm	426	Miss Hawkins
Mildred McGill	415	Miss Blair
Fred Marlow	414	A. J. Thomas
Maggie Brown	414	Geo. Hyland
Florence Parr	410	A. J. Thomas
Floyd Hall	410	J. J. McDonald
Myrtle Devitt	408	
Wilford Fallis	405	
Amy Montgomery	404	J. Vanderburgh
Eunice Sanderson	398	A. J. Thomas
Pearl Dickie	397	Miss Davidson
Morell Montgomery	397	A. J. Thomas
Eva Williams	391	Miss Hawkins
Mabel Spencer	390	Miss Blair
Annie Stewart	390	Miss Hooley
Annie Whitfield	390	Miss Davidson
Herbert Mountjoy	390	A. J. Thomas
Richard Mason	390	Miss Davidson
Wilbert Malcolm	390	Miss Hawkins