

Lot 61, Con. A
DUNCHURCH # 1, SCHOOL OF 1880-90

This above Lot was chosen by the people of that day for the site to build their first log school. Richard Cooper was the Carpenter. The property was formerly owned by Arthur Millin.

When the school was erected, partly in the bank of the hill, it was equipped with wooden benches along the wall for seats. Mr. Cooper was the first teacher also; his table was made by him, and the chair, which was fashioned from one wide white pine board. His scanty supply of books and the chalk lay on the table. With the correction strap concealed in the drawer, or if times got tough with the older lads, the Master carried it in his hand for half an hour or so, just so he could straighten out any dispute, or cheater. Sometimes it was possible for scholars to peek sideways and obtain a proper answer to a math problem. If a child became able to read a simple book and do addition and subtraction, he or she was considered to be quite smart and would probably be kept home then to help there with the work.

Mr. Butler an English Immigrant was one of the early teachers. He settled on the Great North Road about two miles North of the village. He was followed by Mr. Sager and Miss Oliver; these were said to be excellent teachers.

In the early days this building was used for a Church by the Missionaries who traveled through Dunchurch to leave a welcome Message along with the Gospel Hymns sang so meaningfully. In those times the first families seldom had anywhere else to go; except to church on Sunday which is the traditional Sabbath, but not the Lord's Day Sabbath. It was quite a number of years before the Congregation were able to obtain an organ for their church.

The first Public School pupils and Congregational members were the following families: Coopers, Robertsons, McQuhes, Hosick, Hardgraves, Buchanans, Cannings, White, Farleys, Markham, Butlers, Clemenhagens, Millins, Craigs, McCammonds, Macfies, Gibsons, and Mortimers. Several families of Moores and Thomas Dobbs followed also the Andrews families.

We are indebted to one of the scholars Mr. Gerald Markham for part of this information. He walked a distance of four miles to attend this school, he is now ninety four years old.

He lives with his wife in Montreal at this time of writing. His parents first lived in the village until they had a misfortunate fire which took their house down to ashes. Caused they say by a live coal in the ashes they put out on the banking too close to the building.

There are at least three men alive yet who attended the above school. Jimmie Kidd is living out West and still writes to his school chum Allen Robertson. John Hosick lives a quiet life with his daughter Vera Moffatt and her husband who cultivates a large garden of flowers each year around their home in Dunchurch.

