

BLACK'S SCHOOL

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S.S. # 14

Most of the early settlers of this locality came from England, Ireland, and Scotland. Among these were Mr. John Black, Mr. Oliver Gaffield, Mr. John Ghent, Mr. Thomas Dodd and Mr. Henry Williams. Also there were the Holmes and Carruthers families.

The first school on record in this locality was a log building in Cramahe township about 80 rods north-east of the present school. This school, of course, was of the pioneer type, rudely constructed and poorly equipped. The seats in this building faced the walls. The lighting was poor as there were only a few windows. The pupils came many miles to attend and on the winter days a goodly portion of the forenoon would be spent warming frosty fingers and toes after the long walk through the deep snow. The older boys attended only in winter as they spent the other months helping to remove stumps and planting and harvesting the crops at home.

When the two adjoining sections united a new school was built only a few yards west of the present school on the line between Cramahe and Haldimand. This was a frame building approximately 24' x 36' with one porch at the front. The entrance was between the two large pine trees which still stand. This school was poorly built, and as is to often true of those early days, was sadly neglected. An elderly resident of this section tells how he remembers being able to see the sky out through a hole in the roof. It was lathed and plaster only from the wainscoting up, and the clap boards with many knot holes in them were falling off. It was heated by an iron box stove equipped with gang-pipes. Across the front of the room were two long benches where lessons were recited. One day, as is told by a resident who attended this school, the pupils and teacher were startled by a sudden roar. It was immediately discovered that a fire was in progress close to the stove pipes. In a short time the boys had it under control. It was found, however, that old registers and papers had been piled around the chimney evidently, with some purpose, as the boys thought a new school was badly needed. There was no well near by and water had to be carried from a swamp nearly half a mile away. Mr. W. Dickson, one of the residents of this section who attended this school, tells how frightened the pupils were when they heard the shout of the inspector with great long eye brows, entering the room. There was no library in this school but maps of all kinds covered the walls. Some of the teachers of this school were Mr. Marks, Mr. Joe Black, Mr. Chas Radcliffe, Mr. Ermond Burr, Mr. Andy Ross (a retired minister), Mr. Alger and Miss Leslie. Mr. Frank Dodd taught in this school and also the present one.

In 1892 plans for a new school were completed with Mr. George Pomeroy and Mr. Henry Brown, one of the trustees, looking after the business of building the school. This school is situated only a few rods east of the town line between Cramahe and Haldimand, on the Shelter Valley road. It is a frame building facing the south with eight windows and two doors. Since the building of this school much had been done to improve it. In 1916 a modern heating plant was added where formerly a box stove was in use. Slate blackboards have taken the place of the old type wooden ones. A good well is