

Harvey Mills
Lakeside Out
Pine 7.00

HISTORY OF BENNINGTON SCHOOL

Bennington is said to have derived its name from Benson Pelton, who at a very early period in Bennington's history, owned considerable land in the vicinity, including the land on which the first buildings were situated. Some say too, that Bennington was named by some pioneer of the district who had come from Bennington, Vermont. The Pelton family originally came from the New England States. There is a record of a quit claim deed dated 1846 showing that Benson Pelton sold to George Duncan the fifty acres of land on the corner of which the cheese factory now stands.

Donald McKay was the first merchant of Bennington. His store was situated on the south-west corner of the intersection at the 2nd concession. He lived in one end of the building and kept store in the other end where he also conducted a Sunday School class. Joseph Fleming, a weaver, was an outstanding citizen of Bennington in those days. He wove all the material in the garments worn by people for miles around.

The early school district of this community comprised about all the territory now included in school sections 3 and 6. The school, known as Pelton's school, and a cottage for the teacher stood on an acre of land on the south-west corner of Lot 20, concession 3, facing north. The schoolhouse was a small frame building which accommodated about 100 boys and girls, seated on benches or anything else available. The class was presided over by James Youill, very harsh and cruel. No punishment was too severe for this man to inflict on any of his pupils, including his own daughter.

In those days each ratepayer was assessed so much wood for heating the school, according to the number of children he had attending the school. The story is told that one family who lived 4 miles away, and whose father was in arrears for his share of wood, was not allowed to warm themselves at the stove in winter. Money transactions at that time were still in pounds, shillings and pence.

In 1864, School Section No. 3 of West Zorra was organized. The following is the report of the record of organization:-



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was held at the home of George Macdonald for the purpose of choosing a site for a school house. If a frame school could be built for \$100 less than a brick building a frame school was to be erected. It was decided later to build a brick school. The first school was built by James Muir whose tender was for four hundred and thirty-two dollars.



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seasoned, free from black or rotten knots and to be tongued and grooved.

One beam to be placed lengthwise of the building 12 x 12 of sound rock elm or red beech in the centre