

## Built in 1871, Blue Mountain Public School Closes This Term; Hold Reunion Saturday

Blue Mountain school will close its doors and the children of that area will go to the new consolidated school at Limehouse. This Saturday the school is holding a reunion sports program and address by Inspector R. Bornhold.

Mr. R. Shortill of Ballinafad, the teacher, has written the history of the school which follows.

The first school was a wooden structure at the top of Blue Mountain Hill. Many fine old timbers of this ancient building were woven into John Snow's driving shed.

The present school was built in 1871. The land on which this little school is built was formerly owned by Henry Cole. Mr. Cole willingly sold the piece of land on which to erect the school. Later after much persuasion, Mr. Whitehead who owned the adjoining farm to the north, sold another half acre. This made the grounds the size they are today.

**Concert Held**  
When the school was officially opened a concert was held with Acton Band in attendance. Refreshments were served.

The first teacher of the school was Mr. William Cook. His salary was two hundred and fifty dollars — paid in quarterly instalments. The attendance was high — well above that of even today.

Such families as Cooks, Lindsays, Prices, Shortills, Hills, Coles, Campbells, Yemens, Fergusons, Kentners, McEnerys, lived in the vicinity. In the winter the older boys and girls, free of some of their farm duties attended to further their education and also to join in the fun, we are quite safe in saying. This school section fourteen Esqueung contains 3500 acres and includes lots 27 to 32 West Concession 9 and 28 to 32 east Concession 8.

At the beginning the play ground was divided by a high board fence for boys and girls.

**Old Wood Stove**  
A detached woodshed was at the back. A big old wood box stove heated the building. The school furniture consisted first of benches — later double seats — screwed to the floor. These later were replaced by single seats — which at that time we are certain seemed quite modern. Good old seats they were too and much superior to the sliding tables and chairs in use today. We strongly suspect the present wooden teacher's desk is a relic of those very ancient days.

The black boards, long since covered up were of painted boards — which periodically received a coat of dull black paint.

**Many Improvements**  
Through the years various improvements have been made. The various trustees and teachers have done their part each in turn, to make the school for their children as pleasant as possible for a building of this type.

The row of maple trees at the front was planted before the 1900's when Mr. Brain was a teacher. One little tree brought from Cook's bush by small boys, Bob Shortill, Henry Price and Elmer Max was too small for the row at the front so they planted it behind the school. There it grew and has stood along with the others to shade and beautify the lot as the years have rolled on.

From the files of a book when S. H. Lindsay was secretary in December 14, 1900 showed township grant of \$328.86 and Legislative grant \$21. Out of this, \$25 had to be paid for wood and the rest had to cover teacher salary and other expenses.

**First Inspector**  
The first inspector we can find in the records was a Mr. Little. He was succeeded by Mr. Deacon. In that day the inspector drove a horse and buggy from Georgetown livery stable.

In 1899 Mr. Deacon presented Mr. and Mrs. George Campbell (Sr.) Miss Luena Campbell's grandparents with an autographed book as a token of esteem for their hospitality in stabling his horse and giving him the fine farm cooked dinner they served him on his visits.

**Fast Gallop**  
Of course it was the task of the "big" boys to take the horse and buggy to be stabled. Then sometimes the big boys in later days took the inspector's horse down to Mr. Cole's barn. First, however, they had a real fast gallop down to Miller's Corners and back.

The inspector heard the children read, talked to them about

their lesson — and found out from each class, from their ability to answer pointedly and intelligently how well they had been taught. One of the boys from the blackboards tested their mathematical achievements. If little fingers were counting answers behind their backs — well that's where little hands were supposed to be politely placed — so what better occupation than "counting out" answers for their small owners could be found. Inspectors of today inspect children by a grading system much as farm products. Who can say which is the superior way?

Every year in the good old days a school meeting was held at 10.00 a.m. on a day between Christmas and New Year. One new trustee was appointed each year and the books were handed down annually to the one of the three who had been serving the longest. Supplies and other maintenance equipment was officially vetted. Some of the early school board members were of the old families formerly mentioned.

**Children Help**  
Caretaking was done in many ways. Teacher swept the school; boys fired for five or ten cents a morning. Children bought their own slates, books, pencils and other supplies. The present well from which our lovely cool drinking water is obtained, was drilled by "Garthley well drillers" — who used what was known as a tumbling shaft with horse power.

Most of the pupils walked to school but the Ballinafad stage going to Georgetown for mail and store supplies gave the children, from the Fad rides to school behind a reliable team of horses, owned by the storekeeper.

When the school in the year 1910-1915, became crowded, Erin Township pupils from Ballinafad were required to pay 50 cents a month to go to their own school — Peacock. Many of them from over the township line then went to Peacock. The attendance seemed to fluctuate and subside. At one time the enrollment was so low that a meeting was held to close the school and transport the children. In 1940, this aroused the ire of old residents, who met in a body and strongly protested such a drastic action.

**Highest Enrollment**  
In 1955, a few years later, the enrollment rose to a high of fifty-two. Two teachers carried on for a year following which it was decided to transport the senior pupils to Stewarttown two roomed school. Since that time we have had a junior school here with an attendance of from 35 to 40.

During the later years the woodshed was rebuilt with more sanitary facilities. New gates and hedge were placed with the aid of Mr. Bennett and interested parents.

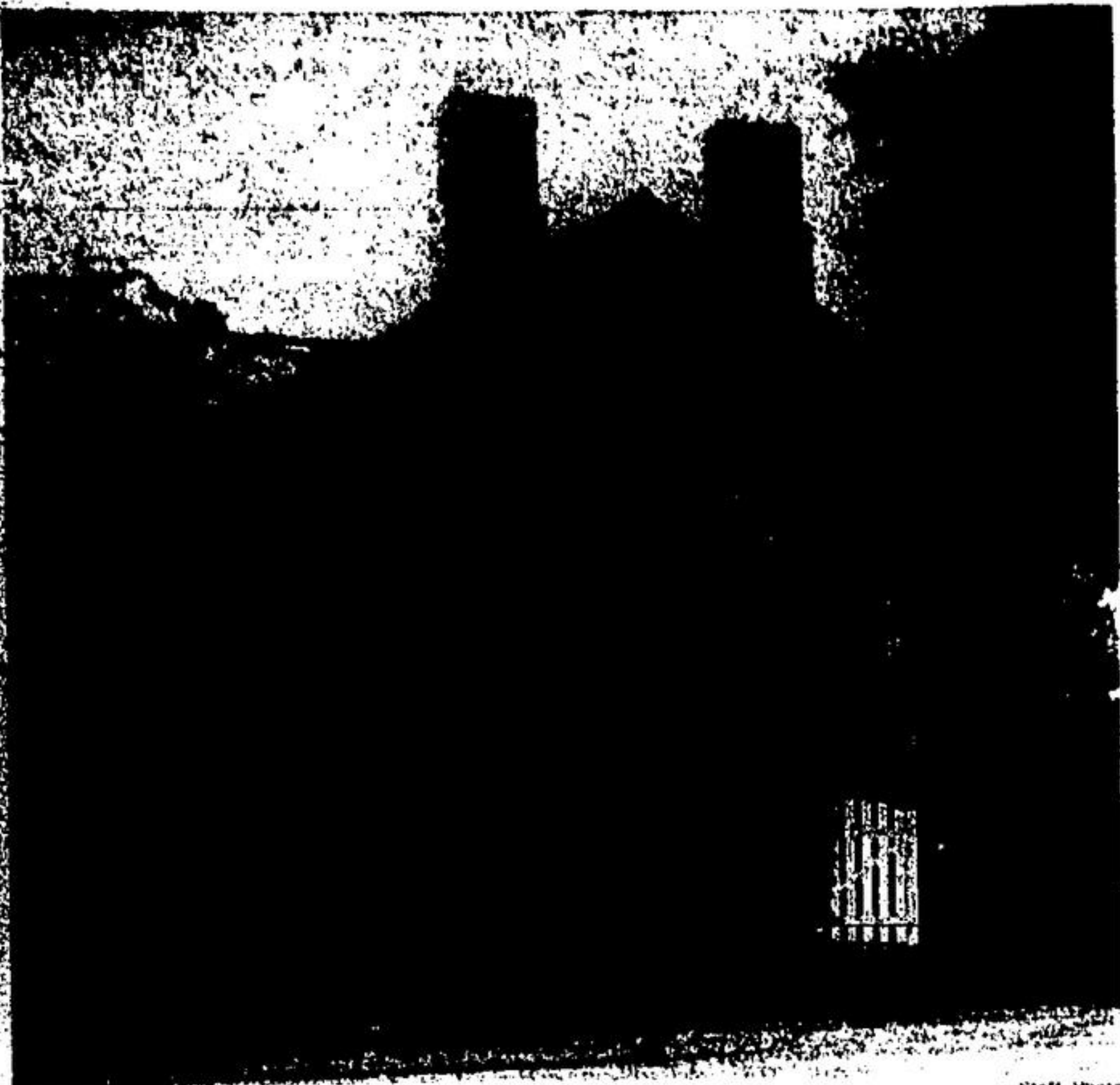
School Area took over the management in 1945. At that time the independent trustees were: Fred W. Shortill, Henry Hills and

James P. Kirkwood. Since then many Esqueung residents have served on the school board. They have done their work conscientiously and efficiently.

Miss Ruth Evans served as Secretary-Treasurer for several years after which Ernie Bakken served.

**Outstanding Pupils**  
Numerous outstanding pupils have left our school to give to their country of their talent and worth. Others who possibly have not achieved fame and merit have each contributed worthwhile results of the learning received at Blue Mountain School. Trophies and plaques have been awarded our pupils. For many years a School Fair was held. Pupils from this school seemed to have made a good showing at such. For a number of years Forestry Competitions were held — Mr. Bennett donated his lot and Mr. Ross, Zone Forester, came each spring and with the pupils from here, planted little trees. For their work and interest the pupils were awarded prizes of fifty and twenty five dollars. With this money we were able to purchase a good radio, material for two sets of swings, which interested parents installed. Music Festivals also gave us our share of awards.

We can truthfully say we are proud of our pupils of Blue Mountain School. They have had the calibre to become good citizens of our land.



BLUE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL, built in 1871, will close its doors forever at the end of this term and pupils who are attending will be transferred to the new central school near Limehouse under construction now. During the official opening of the old school, Acton Band was in attendance and at that time more pupils attended than even today. A celebration is planned for the closing of the school to be held this Saturday beginning at 12 o'clock. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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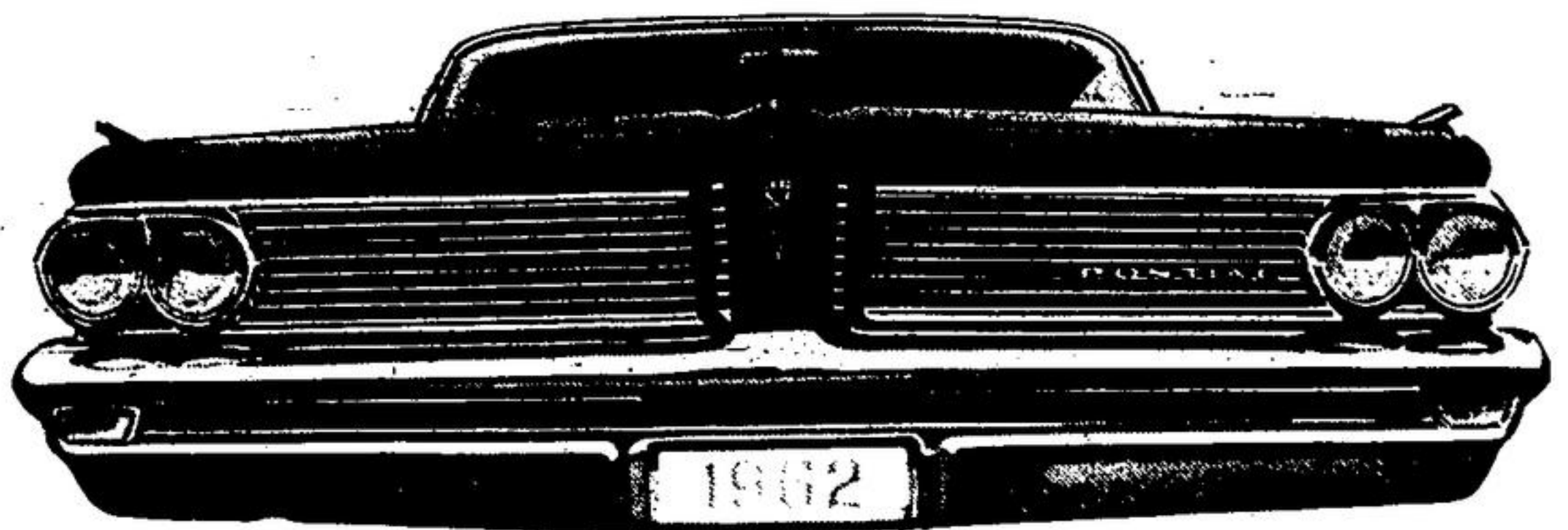
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**Outdoor Church Services Planned**  
Acton Ministerial Association is sponsoring outdoor religious services in Acton Park beginning Sunday July 8. They will continue until Sunday, September 2. Services will be held from 6.30 until 7 p.m. each Sunday evening and Acton Citizens' Band will be in attendance.

Members of the Ministerial Association will take turns at each service with Rev. J. H. Wilson of Evangel Baptist Church and Rev. Dwight Engel of Acton United Church officiating at the first service.

Everyone is invited to attend. In the event of inclement weather services will be cancelled.



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## Next Saturday Famous School to be Commemorated Plaque Marks Rockwood Academy

On Saturday, June 30, commencing at 3.00 p.m., ceremonies in connection with the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the history of the Rockwood Academy, will be held in Rockwood, Wellington County. This plaque is one of a series being erected throughout the province by the Department of Travel and Publicity, acting on the advice of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario.

The ceremony is being arranged and sponsored by the Guelph Historical Society, whose President, Hugh Douglas, will act as program chairman. Leslie R. Gray of London will represent the province's Historic Sites Board.

Among those expected to take part in the ceremony are John Root, M.P.P. (Wellington-Dufferin); His Worship W. E. Hamilton, Mayor of Guelph; G. Whitlow, Warden of Wellington County; J. L. Oakes, Reeve of Eramosa Township; and Mrs. Alvin Lyons, President of the Wellington County Historical Research Society. The plaque will be unveiled by Mrs. Charles Bunching, grand daughter of William Wetherald, the academy's founder. The Rev. Stanley Van Every, retired pastor of the Fenwick Quaker Church will dedicate the plaque.

**Quaker Settlement**  
The picturesque village of Rockwood, situated in one of the most fertile farming regions of western Ontario, was originally the centre of a Quaker settlement. In the early years of the nineteenth century, when many new communities were being established in the area now comprising Wellington County, a pioneer boarding school for boys was opened in the village by William Wetherald. The Wetherald family, members of the Society of Friends, originated in Yorkshire, England, and in 1835 emigrated to Upper Canada, where they settled in the community which became known as Rockwood.

William Wetherald was 14 years of age when the family arrived, and it has been suggested that the lack of educational facilities in the pioneer community first instilled in him the ambition of eventually opening a school of his own. In the endeavour he had the full moral support of the Quaker settlers, who were noted for their interest in education.

**Log Building**  
In 1850 an advertisement appeared in the "Guelph Herald" announcing that William Wetherald was opening a school at Rockwood and would accept male students as boarders. Apparently he received some 20 replies and was thus able to open his school that year.

The first buildings were of primitive log construction, but nevertheless comfortable and able to accommodate boarding pupils. In the operation of his school was based on the close personal direction of his charges. He not only taught them academic subjects but maintained a close personal relationship with each student. He participated in their sporting activities and was thus able to gain the trust and confidence which he considered essential for their guidance.

**Revolutionary Approach**  
Immediately popular with his students, Wetherald attributed this rather revolutionary approach to education to the fact that his own early education in England had been formal and un-sympathetic. With his wife Wetherald was able to provide an atmosphere for his pupils akin to that of a well-adjusted family. A deeply religious man it is also probable that the principles of his faith strongly influenced his philosophy.

The fame and success of the school became such that in 1853 Wetherald was able to replace the log buildings with a more commodious but simply styled building constructed of local stone. This is the building that remains today with few alterations from its original architectural design.

**Known Through Province**  
In the new stone structure the school's success was commensurately increased each year. Wetherald's success in teaching became known not only in the immediate vicinity but throughout the province. Among the graduates were the Honourable A. S. Hardy, Ontario's fourth prime minister, Sir Adam Beck, the founder of the province's hydro-electric system, and James J. Hill, the railway magnate.

After 14 years of arduous work.



BALLINAFAD SCOUTS received the trophy for the most points during the Georgetown District Scout Jamboree held near Rockwood last weekend. Pictured above (left to right) are Ivan Wood of Ballinafad, who received the trophy for his troop, Francis Hulene, Camp Chief and Ron Break of the First Homby Troop who presented the trophy. Homby were the winners last year. Scouts from the Georgetown District attended including two Acton troops.

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