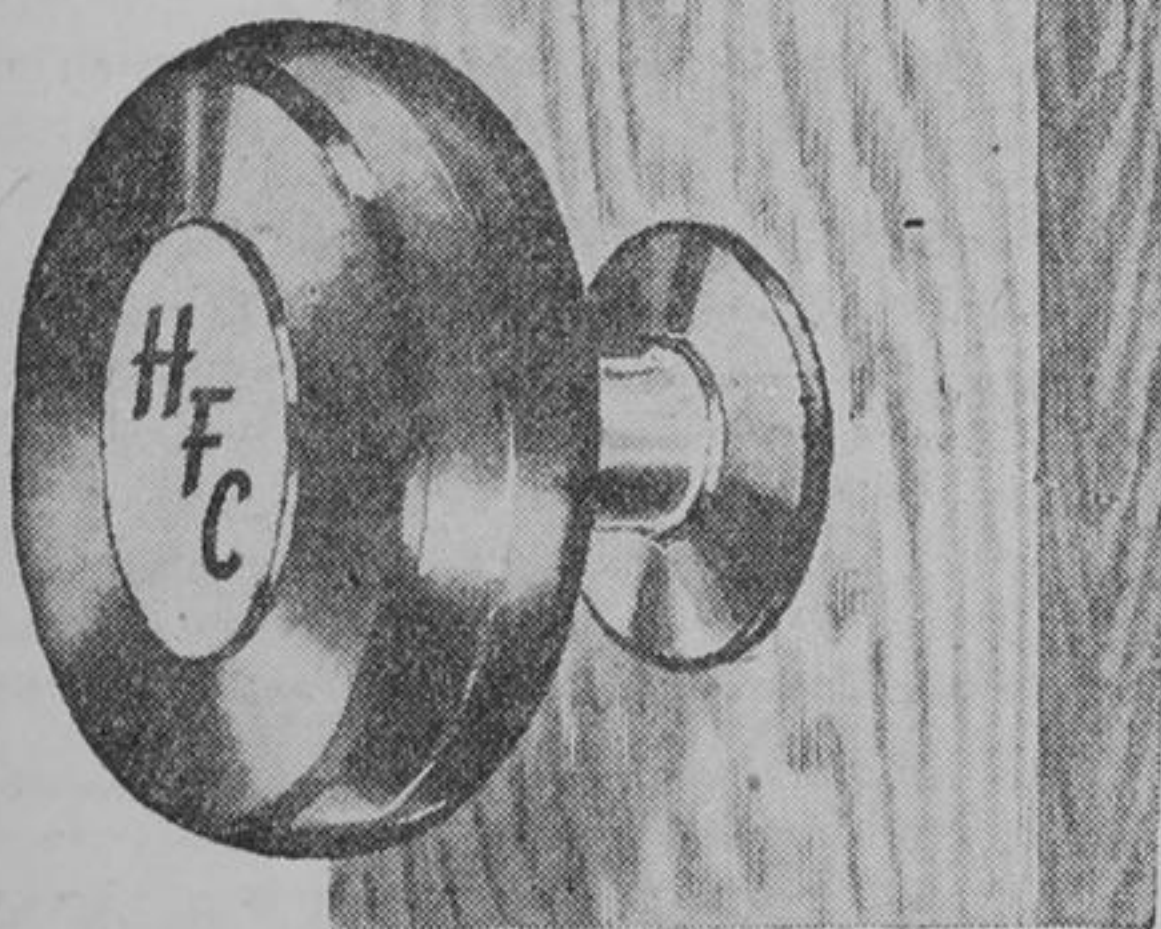


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LANGSTAFF NEWS

CORRESPONDENT:
MRS. M. J. ROY
AV. 5-2496

Junior W. I.

The April meeting of the Institute was held at the home of Mrs. J. Suter, Westwood Lane. The president, Mrs. K. Morris called the meeting to order and 15 members answered the roll call "What our Institute does for our community?" A letter from the St. John's Ambulance was discussed and it was decided to send a donation. A committee was formed for the June tea. The new officers and convenors for 1955-56 were installed: President, Mrs. B. Pattison, 1st vice-president Mrs. M. Morris, 2nd vice-president Mrs. G. Smith, secretary, Mrs. J. Suter, secretary's assistant, Mrs. M. Morris, treasurer Mrs. C. Jones, district director Mrs. K. Morris, branch directors Mrs. F. Russell, Mrs. E. Madeline, home economics and health Mrs. J. Curtis, historical research and current events, Miss M. McArthur, agriculture and Canadian industries, Miss M. Cheney, community activities and public relations, Mrs. F. Russell, citizenship and education Mrs. G. Smith, publicity Mrs. V. Ablett, music leader Mrs. M. Jones, auditors Mrs. O. Boyce and Mrs. J. Curtis.

Mrs. J. Curtis installed the officers. After a game was played, refreshments were served by Mrs. J. Suter and Mrs. J. Curtis. Mark-Vaun W. I. Mrs. M. Holt, Garden Ave. will be hostess for the May meeting to be held May 5. The roll call will be "Exchange of Seeds". There is to be a display of members' hobbies convened by Mrs. Hamblen. Installation of officers for 1955-56 will be held. Cub News

The annual church parade was held April 17. The 1st Langstaff Cub Packs, Keego and Kenne, the 1st Langstaff Scout Troop, and the 2nd Richvale Guide troop paraded with full colors to St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill. The new flags of the Langstaff Cubs and Scouts were officially dedicated. The congregation enjoyed the singing in harmony of the 23rd Psalm by the boys and girls.

Mothers Auxiliary

There was a good turn-out of members at the April meeting of the auxiliary. A discussion was held on the family picnic and further details will be given at a later date. The treasurer reported that the Rummage Sale was a financial success. Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Webster and Mrs. LeRoux reported that they attended the Conference for Auxiliary members on March 29 at Willowdale. Mrs. Campbell was presented with a cup and saucer in appreciation of her services as Telephone Convener.

Personals

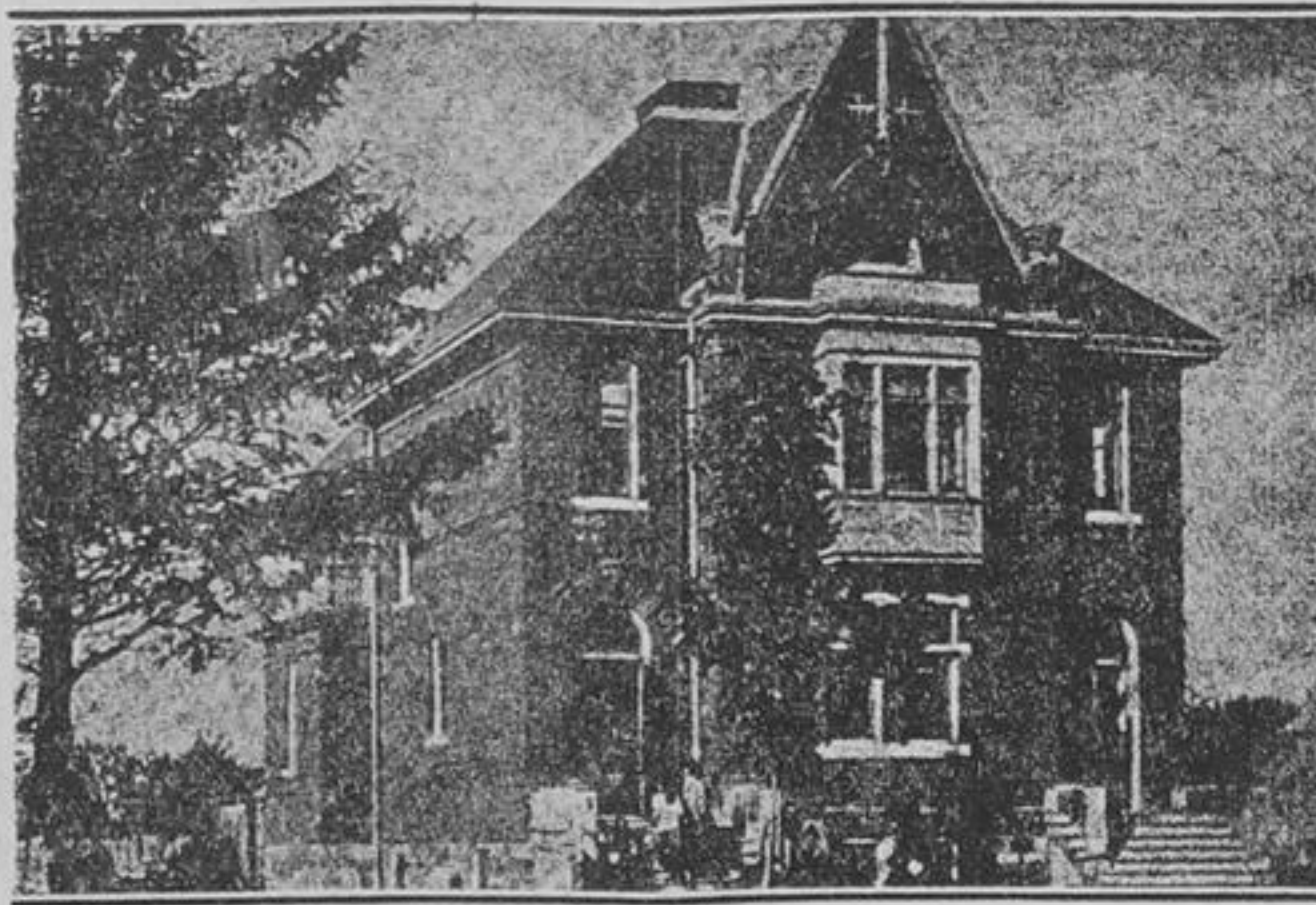
Mrs. M. Blackburn, Essex Ave., was guest of honor at a pink and blue shower held at the home of Mrs. J. Johnstone on Monday evening of this week. Among those present were Mrs. S. Lusher, Mrs. E. Worsdale, Mrs. A. Watt, Mrs. F. Wear, Mrs. R. Evans, Mrs. M. Roy, Mrs. White, Mrs. N. Hicks, Mrs. E. Bailey. Unable to attend were Mrs. W. Blackburn, Mrs. E. Blackburn, Mrs. B. Leahy.

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Richmond Hill's Third High School

Only 26 years had passed since the instigation of free schooling in the Province of Ontario, when Richmond Hill's third High School was erected at what is now the corner of Yonge and Wright Streets. The village's municipal offices now hold forth in the same building which shows minor structural changes since its erection 58 years ago. Reading into local history reveals Richmond Hill citizens, "always in the van of every righteous movement", as among the first in Canada to declare themselves, by a large majority, in favour of free schools.

It is difficult today to arouse a mental picture of the many hurdles to be jumped before the institution of free education in the province in 1871, and the great pride felt in 1897 when a modern, new High School, the third since 1853, was erected. Most members of the Board of Trustees did not have a High School Education but were gifted with the foresight of the advantages it could afford. The High School then, as now, was referred to as a "monument to both builders and architects", but it was not said disparagingly. Accounts of the struggle for education show the same attitudes, the same problems which have to be faced today, and mirrors the fears of many who thought, "In educating our boys we are educating them to become clever rascals"; that knowledge led to a life of crime. The building of the new High School was "the fulfillment of the liveliest hopes of the friends of education in the village," and is climaxed today by the news that a third High School is now under consideration for the district.

Agitation Great
In 1866 the agitation that swept like a wave all over Ontario, as to whether schools should be sustained under the old rate bill system or whether free schools should be adopted, reached Richmond Hill. It was the subject of conversation in every group that gathered on the street, it was the chief topic in the hotel and in every home. Those who were opposed to free schools said it was "A most unjust thing", that it was mortgaging all properties for all time to come, that the education would be for other people's children.

One elderly gentleman who was worth \$75,000 declared free education was "monstrous, ruinous." Feeling was intense and excitement ran high in those days. There was much agitation during the selection of a site for the new High School, and in an effort to acquaint the public with feelings on the subject and in an effort to mould public opinion, "in the right direction, for six weeks a discussion in the local newspaper was kept up." At the next annual school meeting, local people were among the first in Canada to declare themselves, by a large majority, in favour of free schools. In 1871 schools in Ontario were declared free, "and now, in all Public Schools, invidious distinctions are done away with. The rich and the poor meet together, and the school master is a father to them all."

Hewed Log Schoolhouse
Writings about the first schoolhouse erected in Richmond Hill in the early 1820's show residents were few and far between. The school was a hewed log structure about 20x40 feet, elevation about 10 feet, and chinked with mud. It had two or three small, square windows, a low ceiling and a very low door. It stood a couple of rods south of where the present Public School building stands. The schoolmaster of that day, Benjamin Barnard, would teach all day, look after the boys who played hockey after four o'clock, and act as village moral guardian during the evening, all for the meagre sum of \$12. per annum.

Converted To Piggery
In 1849, when its first brick successor was erected, the old log building had to retire. It was purchased by a Mr. Dalby, landlord of the tavern, then known as the "Lass of Richmond Hill", and later the Dominion Hotel (William Neal's). Mr. Dalby converting it into "one of the most useful institutions of the day, an institution whose merits and demerits are discussed today (1897) on every political platform in Ontario, an institution that may yet be the downfall of the present government—a piggery."

Extravagant Too!
When the first brick school was erected in 1849 there was a great cry at the extravagance of the trustees. Many thought a 7 x 9 year building sufficiently large, but by the laws of generation and immigration it soon became too small and another of equal dimensions was built at the west end. Again the rising generation began to show signs of swarming and had to be hived in the "Old Grammar School." The first grammar school was established December 2, 1851. In 1853, as a result of the generosity of the people, assisted by the government, the first building was erected at a cost of \$640. The new institution soon got too large for its juvenile boots, so in 1873 a larger building called a High School was built for \$4,000, of which Richmond Hill citizens donated \$1,170 in one year. This building went up and smoke December 23, 1896, "Peace be to its ashes!"

25 Cents Per Month
In his speech at the opening of the new High School in 1897, Mr. Harrison commented, "I have noticed there has been a great improvement in school accommodations, but also a great advancement in our methods of sustaining education. How many are there in the audience who know nothing of the obstructions that lay in the way of education in days gone by. How many know anything of the old rate bill system of 30 years ago, when every pupil had to take 25 cents at the beginning of each month to secure for himself a seat in any school." It meant that the oldest boy went to school until he was big enough to do something else, when the next in age took his place in the school form. It meant few families could send all their children at once, and many could not send any.

In connection with the old rate bill system there was a free school clause which stated that a widow's children could get their education free by obtaining the consent of the trustees. The child of unfortunate circumstances, however respectable his family, was subjected to the insult of the ignorant and the sneer of the malicious until it burnt like hot iron into the brain. But a welcome change came, and all classes, whatever their positions in society, could seek for education on the same level." **Hopes Fulfilled**
Mr. Harrison also recalls the official opening of the new High School in 1897. Thursday, December 30, 1897, will long be remembered in Richmond Hill. It saw the fulfillment of the liveliest hopes of the friends of education here. It saw the opening of the handsome new building which, as a High School, is not surpassed by anything in the province. The new building is situated on Yonge Street at the corner of Mill Street, and occupies the front of a lot one and a quarter acres in extent. It is the third High School building that has been put up in the village since 1853, and cost in the neighbourhood of \$7,000. It has two storeys and a basement. It contains three large classrooms with cloakrooms adjacent, a commodious library and Board room and capacious hallways and stairways. The basement has ample room for gymnasium. There are, in all, about twenty rooms in the building. The exterior of the building presents a handsome appearance. It is red brick, with grey stone foundation. There are two main entrances at the front and at the rear an entrance to the basement. The roof is slate. The work on the interior is chaste and well executed, and reflects great credit not only upon the builder and the painter, but also upon the architect. The classrooms are well lighted by rear and left windows and are commodious and comfortable. The science room is being well supplied with the apparatus necessary for practical work. The whole building is heated and ventilated by two Pease furnaces. Everything about it is perfectly modern. The mason work was done by Mr. J. Kelly, and the wood work by L. Innes & Sons. The building was erected from the designs of Mr. J. Francis Brown, architect, Toronto, who was selected from many competitors to prepare plans and superintend the work. The completed building is a monument to both builder and architect. While ample provision has been made by the Board of Education for the intellectual training of the pupils, their physical

welfare has not been overlooked. To the south of the building is a fair-sized lawn for the girls. It is suitable for such games as girls like to indulge in. It is separated from the boys' playground by a row of spruce trees. The boys have enough room in the rear and at the north side to cultivate robust bodies in such games as football, running, jumping, etc. There is also on the lot a well of excellent water.

The exercises on the afternoon of December 30, were such as befitted the opening of this institute of learning. The Board of Education consists of the following gentlemen:—M. Naughton (chairman); J. A. E. Switzer secretary-treasurer; J. N. Hutchinson, M.D.; A. Newton, W. T. Storey, M. McNair, J. Boyle, D. Lyndett, W. H. Clubine, G. McDonald, W. Harrison, and F. McConaghy. These were nearly all present at the reception at 1 p.m. when the new school was for the first time thrown open for inspection.

M. Naughton, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Education, called the assemblage to order at 2:30 p.m. Around the chair were seated Mr. Teffy (postmaster), Mr. A. G. F. Lawrence, Dr. Wilson, Revs. Grant and McCulloch, and the Principal A. E. Coombs, M.A., B. Paed. The room was filled to its utmost capacity, nearly 200 being seated in the auditorium. The chairman, Mr. Switzer, Mr. Harrison, Dr. Hutchinson, Mr. Coombs, Mr. Lawrence, Dr. Wilson and Revs. Grant and McCulloch, made speeches on educational subjects.

A pleasing feature of the programme was the presentation of a handsome flag, 9 ft. x 4½ ft. to the Board of Education. The flag was bought by the pupils of the school and was presented on their behalf by Mr. Coombs. The chairman made a very fitting reply on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Lawrence, a former principal of the school, now a successful barrister in Toronto, presented leaving diplomas to the following pupils:—F. M. Brown, A. W. Glass and J. W. McDonald. He also presented certificates to the successful pupils as follows: Form III—F. M. Brown, A. W. Glass, J. W. McDonald; Form II—F. M. Brown, A. W. Glass, G. Grant, F. Harrison, F. Hutter, G. H. Jackson, H. E. Ketter, J. G. McDonald, L. Nichols, and H. Vanderburg; Form I—V. A. Brydon, Alex. Boyle, Annie Boyle, F. M. Bowes, S. Cooper, L. Dunlop, J. Hadwin, A. Horner, W. Joyce, E. Marsh, C. L. Malloy, J. A. McNeil, N. Naughton, C. Shunk. In addition the following had achieved matriculation standing:—R. S. Storey, J. W. McDonald, W. Trench and E. Powers. The speaker also referred to the death of Beatrice Harris, which occurred last summer. She had written on the Form I examination, but before the reports were published announcing her success, diphtheria had carried her off.

At the public meeting held in the evening the Masonic Hall was crowded to the doors and many were not able to gain admission. Mr. Naughton again presided and made a happy chairman as he did in the afternoon. He regretted very much to have to tell his audience that Hon. G. W. Ross was unable to be present as previously announced, but had sent a worthy substitute in the person of Mr. Wm. Houston.

Letters of regret had also been received from Rev. Father Teffy, Rev. Father McMahon, Rev. W. W. Bates, Judge Falconbridge and Dr. Coulter. During the evening interesting speeches were made by Rev. G. McCulloch, Rev. J. A. Grant, and Dr. Euston Sisley. Each speaker referred to the excellent record of the Richmond Hill High School, and each expressed confidence in its future success."

Editor's Note: Quotations and information contained in this article come from writings of the late William Harrison, who had recorded the history of Richmond Hill, and who was a member of the Board or Trustees at the time of the erection of the new High School in 1897.

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