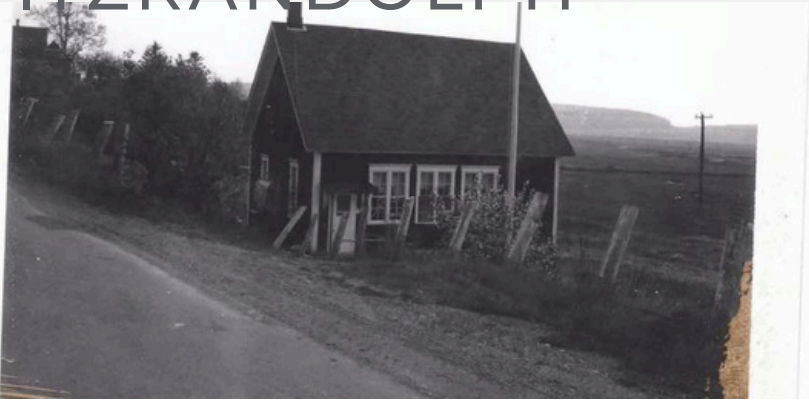


BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOUTH MUSQUASH SCHOOL; BY MABEL R. FITZRANDOLPH

Information from: The Beacon, Point

Lepreau News Bullitin, 1978-10-30



In 1865, a schoolhouse was built about 150 feet west of where the Baptist Church now stands. This was the first of three schools throughout the years. It was a small, crude one room structure with no conveniences and only benches for the pupils to sit on.

With slates in hand to make their letters and numbers on, they listened and learned; some eagerly, some not.

A few sixteen to twenty year olds wanted to learn where as others were made to attend by a strict parent. A school master reigned supreme. (Fun tales say he was often outwitted).

Many pupils walked over five miles per day from Gooseberry Cove and Five Fathom Hill. Often older pupils piggy-backed the smaller children. Tardiness was very rare during the school hours from 9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

"Old beginners" went to school long enough to be able to write and spell their names and do simple sums. The young ones made a continous attendance until age fourteen.

As years passed, conditions improved but the school became overcrowded. In 1887 the tax payers decided to build a modern, larger school. A site was chosen further down the road and purchased from Mrs. Freelove Trafton for "two dollars now paid by the said trustees". The trustees were: George Bynon, Patrick Kerrigan and Albert Henderson who had been a school master.

The school was built by volunteers and was about 18 x 26 feet in size. There were two windows on each side and one in the girls cloak room at the front of the building. High sheathed ceiling, hardwood floor, plaster walls, a cast iron wood stove, a 4' by 4' blackboard at the front and a long wooden blackboard across the back wall were other features of the school's interior. There was a new teacher's desk and chair and combination double desk and seats for the students. The partioned entry also seved as a cloak room for the boys. A divided "four holer" out back and a woodshed nearby completed this "modern school"

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John Mackinnon had been and remained the school master for several years until 1891 when poor health forced him to retire. School marmas now succeeded school masters.

This school became the social centre and for many years dances and pie socials were held to benefit the school and Churches and other needy projects. There are many, yet, who have fond memories of the "old" South Musquash school.

In the spring of 1933 the school burned so immediate plans were made to rebuild. Ernest E. Payne, James Kerrigan Sr, and Thomas Fitzrandolph were the trustees. Ratepayers volunteered labour so a one room "regulation size" school was built and ready for the fall term.

This school was used until 1950 when the student population dwindled and the few remaining students were sent to Musquash School. Liberty Hill pupils and several from Prince of Wales were brought to the school by a contracted vehicle.

In 1965, the Equal Opportunity Program saw the closing of the South Musquash school and the beginning of bussing students to Saint John. Monies from the County School fund were used to build the Recreation Centre.

The South Musquash School was purchased by the government moved in 1968 to its present site on the hillside. We are proud of our school!

Worthy of note is that Ernest E. Payne served here as secretary to the trustees from 1918 to 1944. The last teacher was Mrs. Mary (Mills) Abbott, who taught from January 1959 to June 1965.

The old South Musquash School Register cover contains the autographs of over forty teachers from 1905 to 1959. A few are:

- Madeline McVay (Mrs. Andrew Graham)
- Violet Beyea (Mrs. John Virgin Sr.)
- Helen L. Johnston (Mrs. Edgar Dean)
- Lois V. Rossley (Mrs. Edward McCluskey)
- Doreen Hayward (Mrs. Harry Cogswell)
- Marjorie Baldwin (Mrs. Alvin Hawkes)

Two other names of local interest are Nina Gregory 1898 and Eliza A. C. Hargrove 1900. This verse is finely penned inside the old Register Cover:

Whatever men say in their blindness and spite of fancies of youth, there is nothing so kingly as kindness and nothing so royal as truth. Fond memories linger tho' an era has closed with the country school.