

FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Cork Settlement School, 1905

by Dr. William Randall

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In response to the Scrapbook items relating to Cork families I got a phone call from Carol Gillett telling me that she and her husband Ronald have been renovating the old Cork schoolhouse and have found some old school registers. I visited with her and she graciously loaned me this material and I was amazed to find how much of the past can be reconstructed from these registers. Jocelean Hall undertook the task of matching the fragments of paper together much as one would try to assemble a jigsaw puzzle. With hours and hours of painstaking labour, tape and glue she was able to put together about twenty years of Cork history. These originals are being photocopied by Helen Craig and will eventually be micro-filmed and put in the N.B. Archives. For this month, however, I would like for you to imagine what school there would have been like in 1905.

The building was 22x28 feet and in that year had 32 children on the register. One can still see the marks on the floor where the desks were fastened down. The teacher was Ida Sharkey, but for part of the year her younger sister Lily was a supply teacher. From Roach came the Crowley's. That year there was Edward, age 15, James, age 13, Neil (probably Cornelius age 11, Aggie age 12, Alice age 8. There were other Crowley's in the class, Annie, daughter of Cornelius M. and his wife Bridget. Louis, age 9. Willie Kennedy was 14. He played the violin and his mother was a happy little woman who used to go about her kitchen singing. There were Maloney's, Bessie (Elizabeth) youngest daughter of James Maloney and his wife Margaret. Bessie's brother Michael Alfred, and Nellie who may have been Elizabeth. The latest occupants of the Maloney home would have been Edgar Bruce and his mother. There were Connors children. Maggie (Margaret A.) born June 26, 1893. Her father was Timothy and his wife was Margaret J.; Maggie's sister, Ada born Nov. 28, 1896. John Coholan age 11, may have been the adopted son of Jack and Julie Coholan. There were McCanns; James, Dowl, John and Jane (or Jennie). Their father was Arthur and his wife was Nellie. There were Macks or the name Magillacuddy. There was James, and Aggie (Agnes) and Neil (Cornelius). They were the children of Cornelius and Mary A. Two Harris boys; Perley O. and Isaac Basil. Their father was Thomas O. and his wife Ada. Other children Helena Donohue age 8, Bessie Gorman age 10, Willie Gorman age 6, James Daley age 11, son of John and his wife Honora. Leo Reardon age 16, the adopted son of widow Mary. Mary came to Canada in 1840 and lived with her sister Bridget. There was Maggie Donohue age 14, Leo Gorman, age 13, Maggie Crowley, age 7, Louis Crowley, age 9, Frank Crowley, age 11. Frank Crowley married Alice McMannus. In his later life he disappeared while hunting in the fall. He was not found until the following spring, and when found his body was in a natural sitting position leaning against the trunk of a tree at Grand Falls, Charlotte County. Frank had been an engineer on the railroad between Saint John and McAdam.

School days in 1905 were from nine to four, a lunch hour and two fifteen minute recesses - just time for wet feet, crying girls, and fist fights. Lunch pails could have held meagre fare as times were hard, incomes were small and families were large. Many of the older children whose names are on the register may have had quite irregular attendance for they would be needed at home or in the woods. One man told me that he was the eldest of a family of twelve and he could not remember a year when his mother wasn't pregnant. He became a great cook, but only achieved three years of schooling.

Teachers were strict but the basic education was solid. Many children from Cork became teachers or priests.

If you have found this months item interesting remember its because many people have contributed their efforts and have been alert to salvage items of historic interest.

If you find something in your attic or basement that you think might add colour to our understanding of history, please tell me about it.

