

URCSS #7 [ST. MARY'S OR 'RAGTOWN']

St. Mary's Separate School had its original start as a public school. At its closing the school was located on the Northeast corner of Number three Highway and the Serton Sideroad. However, the school's original location was across the road from this site. Having its heritage reaching back before the 1900's, the first construction of St. Mary's was composed of the readily available logs of the Essex County woods. A frame one-room school was built in 1901, with an additional room being built onto the school in 1918.

Although an exact date of the original school's erection is not recorded, some idea of its general age can be obtained through the lifespan of the late John McAuliffe. Mr. McAuliffe was born on Feb. 16, 1872 and began attending the log school house of the initial St. Mary's in 1877. In 1892 Mr. McAuliffe returned to the school, but this time rather than sneaking the tack on the teacher's chair, he was the one who yelped upon sitting on it. John McAuliffe had returned as the school's instructor. Mr. McAuliffe continued to live in the area of Maidstone and St. Mary's all his life.

In the early 1960's as the public school districts were being redefined, the separate school areas as well were undergoing the same changes. On June 21, 1960 work began on a new two-room separate school located in Maidstone; centralized so as to accomodate the students of both the old St. Mary's (RCSS #7) and RCSS #5 and 8.

Excerpt taken from the book "A Ninety-one Year Old Tree with Two-hundred Years of Roots" by Laura L. Langlois

This new school which cost some 55,000 dollars was made ready for September of that year, and was designated as the new RCSS #5, or St. Mary's. Both of the older schools became obsolete and were closed, while the new school expanded at a favourable rate. On June 18, 1963 it was decided that the new St. Mary's was to become eight rooms, and this was carried out as planned.