

S. S. No. II (FRITH PUBLIC SCHOOL)

FRITH PUBLIC SCHOOL (S. S. No. Eleven) was built in 1960 along with two other new public schools in the township, as a building program by the Sandwich South School Area Board to complete their plans for all new schools in the Area. It involved the relocation of one school, namely S. S. No. 1 and another new school on the old site of S. S. No. 6 and the creation of the new school section, Frith Public School or No. Eleven.

The program began with the December, 1959 meeting of the Area School Board when a delegation from the neighborhood of the new school met with the Board and presented a petition for a new school in their district which would eliminate the necessity for their children to cross Highway #401 to No. 1 school or Highway #3 to No. 6 school.

On January 26th, 1960, the School Board met with the Planning Board and at a special meeting the same evening the school board passed a motion to build a new two-roomed school on the North Talbot Road, East of Walker Road. Two and one-half acres of land was purchased from Charles Frith at \$500.00 an acre for the new site on the Frith farm located on North Talbot Road just east of the Chesapeake & Ohio R. R. tracks. At the Sept. 20th meeting of the Board, Mr. Milton Farough then Vice-chairman of the Board reported that a delegation of the Board had secured Charles Frith's approval of the proposal to call the new school the "FRITH PUBLIC SCHOOL".

J. W. Storey & Associates of Chatham was the architect and presented plans for all three schools on May 30th, on June 27th the tenders were opened and on July 19th, Collavino Brothers Construction Company of Windsor were awarded the contract at \$113,650, later amended to \$114,000 to cover alternatives requested by the Board. A request was forwarded to Council for a debenture to raise \$137,000.

On August the 8th, the Board met ratepayers of the Frith Public School section to advise that Miss Ethel Plant had been hired as principal and Miss Miriam Collins as Assistant who would teach the Junior classes, also to advise that until the new building was ready classes would have to be staggered and it was decided to hold classes in the Town Hall. The three schools were ready to open within a few weeks of each other, Frith school being delayed a short period due to a small tornado which ripped a part of the roof away. But lo and behold on October 29th, (Sat.) the pupils who would be attending the new school moved their books and equipment into their new quarters. Pictured in the Windsor Star of Nov. 1st, 1960 there were three young ladies moving a table and desks from the Sandwich South Township Hall where classes had been held since the opening of the Fall term in September. Pictured were Susan Shuttleworth, 6; Bonnie Frith, 6; and Cathy Shuttleworth, 7.

The official opening, however, did not take place until December 9th and was held in the school on Friday evening at 8.15 p.m. The guest speaker was W. R. Quance of Essex, Public School Inspector for Inspectorate No. 2. Entertainment was provided by pupils. Willard Morris of Leamington, Past President of the Ontario Trustees and Ratepayers' Association presented a Bible to Miss Plant the Principal for the School on behalf of the Association. A copy of the "Garden Gateway to Canada" was presented to the school by Mrs. W. A. Crowder, president of the Oldcastle Women's Institute on their behalf. These copies were also presented to all public and separate schools in the township of Sandwich South from the Institute. It is a comprehensive history of Essex County written by Dr. Neil F. Morrison, material for which was considerably collected by Women's Institute members throughout the County who assisted Dr. Morrison in obtaining the material printed in the book. Mrs. Crowder had charge of gathering the material in Sandwich South Township, being the curator of Oldcastle Women's Institute.

Early in 1961, parents met to consider forming a Home & School Association, following permission from the School Board their organization got off the ground and they called it the Frith Parent's and Teacher's Group. Their first project being a Valentine card party on February 17th held in the school with 16 tables. On March 6th, they held a meeting with their first speaker being Mr. D. C. Bawtenheimer who lectured to them on astronomy. Mr. Bawtenheimer has his equipment set up on his residence grounds in the township and invited the children of the school to view his observatory in June. The senior pupils were present to hear his speech on outer space and was very much to their liking.

The school participated in the annual Music Festival, it's first and the 15th for the Music Association. Bonnie Frith won a first with girl's vocal solo at King Edward School with 82 points for 8 years and under and her brother Jimmy Frith won the boy's vocal solo with 84 points for boys 11 years and under. The School Board's Trophy went to Bonnie Frith for a ~~best~~ solo along with Maureen Fleet from Percy McKee School who were tied. Miss Agnes Hartley was Music Supervisor and who sent in her resignation at the end of the school term after being supervisor of Sandwich South Township Schools since the beginning of the Area Board in 1945. The Festival was held the first week of March and parents were very co-operative in arranging transportation into the city for the children participating.

The Parents' & Teachers' Club were responsible for the first Field Day on June 28th, when the children with their moms and dads and their pre-school brothers and sisters ended the year in their new school on a happy note. The day was made to order, warm and sunny and the fun started with lunch at 12 noon served under the trees at the James Weston home, the home of their first president. There was plenty of hot dogs, pop and ice cream for all. Then everybody moved across the road to Weston Park where races and a ball game ended the fun at 4.00 p.m. Winners were as follows: Running race, Grade 1 and 2: Janice Gilmour, Marilyn Heaton, Kathie Shuttleworth. Boys - Grade 1 & 2: Ronnie Hedge, Donnie Kennedy, Wayne Durocher. Girl's Grade 3 & 4: Nancy Washbrook, Lois Washbrook, Jean Shuttleworth. Boys, Grade 3 & 4: Roland Kennedy, Larry Chicole, Neil Weston. Girl's 5 & 6: Susan Weston, Margery Heaton, Kathleen Hedge. Boy's 5 & 6: Tommy Managhan, Larry Brindley and David Shuttleworth. Girl's 7 & 8: Susan Managhan, Betty Kennedy, Sharon Shuttleworth. Boy's 7 & 8: Gordon Shuttleworth, David Washbrook, Kelly Kirkman. Pre-school children - Donnie Burke, Donnie Shuttleworth, Dannie Shuttleworth. Girl's three-legged race: Judy Carlyle, Susan Shuttleworth, Susan Weston, Valerie LaFramboise, Susan Managhan, Sharon LaFramboise. Boy's Wheelbarrow race: Tommy Managhan, Larry Brindley, Neil Weston, Larry Chicole, Billie Burke, Roland Kennedy. Running Broad Jump, girl's: Grades 4, 5 & 6 - Susan Weston, Kathleen Hedge, Valerie LaFramboise. Running Broad Jump, boys - grades, grades 4, 5 & 6: Tommy Managhan, Roland Kennedy, Larry Chicole. Running Broad Jump, girl's - grades 7 & 8: Susan Managhan, Betty Kennedy, Judy Carlyle. Running Broad Jump, boy's - grades 7 & 8: Gordon Shuttleworth, Kelly Kirkman, David Washbrook. Kicking shoe: David Washbrook, Roland Kennedy, Dale Washbrook. Tug-of-war won by David Washbrook's team. Baseball game - Captains David Washbrook and Gordon Shuttleworth, won by Gordon Shuttleworth's team.

Officers of the Parents' & Teachers' Club the first year were: President - James Weston; 1st. Vice-president - Percy Frith Jr; 2nd vice-president - Hugh Gilmour; Secretary - Mrs. Carl Washbrook; treasurer - Mrs. Kenneth Carlyle.

Their April meeting saw a local girl, Mrs. Ray Nicholson and her husband (Ruth Frith) spoke and showed slides of nature life in New Guinea. Mrs. Nicholson is the daughter of the Percy Friths' Sr. who reside a short distance from Frith School on the North Talbot Road. She received her elementary education here in the township at S. S. No. 6 (Percy McKee) and was a graduate of Essex High School. The pictures were fascinating and it was like being transported to another world. Mr. Nicholson said the natives were very primitive, living in an age comparable to the stone age. They were helping to translate the Bible into many of the native languages. The Nicholsons were home visiting their families after a five year term in New Guinea as missionaries. They took back many pictures of our snow laden Essex County as just before their departure a terrific blizzard had hit the county dumping about eight feet of snow. Many or most of the natives in New Guinea has never seen snow.

In November, 1961 a rash of vandalism hit the schools of Sandwich South, the three newest schools all being broken into. In an effort to halt the entries the school board dusted off a motion which had been on the books for some time, and offered a \$50.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those breaking into the schools. The board instructed teachers not to leave any money in the schools. Frith school was the first to be entered and \$53.00 was taken along with fountain pens valued at \$8.00; this was on Halloween. Then No. 1 was entered and nothing seemed to be taken and then Fairplay where again nothing seemed amiss. In each case a slit in a pane of glass to open a window and desk locks were broken.

The Board authorized Mr. James Fleet to purchase a radio for the school and the W. A. Crowders had just purchased a new one and as their old one was in good shape the Board purchased it and it was good until the school was phased out eleven years later. They also supplied the school with a refrigerator which served to the end of the school service.

In 1963, Miss Sharon Cline replaced Miriam Collins as Junior Room teacher and in 1964, Aug. 15th, Miss Cline was married to John William Robinson of Bothwell and she continued to teach at the school.

A Christmas concert at the school presented by the pupils and teachers was much enjoyed on Dec. 16th, 1965. The program consisted of recitations by Amy Frith, Leon Cope, Donald Shuttleworth, Christopher Lepain, David Quick and Mary Beth Cope. Readings by Leslie Sedgeman, Bonnie Frith and Susan Shuttleworth; a piano solo by Jean Shuttleworth and a tambourine solo by Charlotte Quick. Two comic dialogues by the senior room, a selection by the junior room rhythm band and several Christmas hymns by the entire school closed the program after which lunch was served by the Parent-Teachers' Club. A raffle ticket was drawn, Mrs. Pastorius of Essex winning a lovely quilt which had been donated by Mrs. Bernard Burke. The evening ended with the presentation of a wedding gift to the music and art teacher, Mr. Al Linnell who was being married.

S. S. NO. 11 (FRITH SCHOOL) (Cont.)

HONORS TO RETIRING TEACHER was the Star headline, June 17th, 1966.

There was a double-purpose open house at Frith Public School to celebrate the last grade 8 graduation from the school and to honour Miss Ethel Plant who was retiring at the end of the school year. She had been principal and senior room teacher for the past six years. A resident of Essex, she taught school in and around the area for about 45 years. She formerly taught here in Sandwich South at S. S. No. 5. as far back as 1915.

Miss Plant's first grade eight pupil, Mr. Gordon Clickner and the youngest in her 1966 class, Donald Giles, were present. Guest speaker was the Rev. Marshall of Woodslee United Church. Among the many gifts presented to her was a scroll with the names of the thirty Frith school pupils whom she graduated over the past six years by Susan Managhan. The first graduating class had Susan Managhan and Judy Carlyle; the second in 1962 was Susan Weston and Kathleen Hedge; in 1965, six graduates, three boys and three girls received their pins and best wishes on June 21st. they were: Jean Shuttleworth, Lesley Sedgman, Anne Marie Havinga, Neil Weston, Robert Giles and Ian Gilmour. The Parents' and Teachers' Club had David Klinck, a local boy made good, speak to these graduates and give them a glimpse of High School life, Dave, being a Science teacher at Essex District High School where they would all be attending in the Fall. A token of appreciation was presented to Miss Plant on behalf of the parents and graduates. Miss Plant's last graduates were: Marion McAtee, Lois Washbrook, Ronald Havinga, Bill Burke and Ricky Kirkman, these also being the last graduates of Frith Public School as from here on in only junior classes were being taught at this school until it was phased out in June 1971. Mrs. Wallace Tiers became principal following the retirement of Miss Plant and taught the senior room while Mrs. John Robinson taught the junior room for the previous five years. On June 24th, 1968 an open house was held at the school for both teachers, Mrs. Tiers having taught just two years at Frith's School but had previously taught for 13 years at S. S. No. 6 (Percy McKee School).

Frith's school yard was fenced by Walter & Morley Hyland who were awarded the contract for \$438.56; posts to be 1 rod apart instead of 20 feet as estimated, job done during summer of 1964.

On June 22nd, 1964, the Parent-teachers' Club secured Mrs. Elmer Queen, a former Essex District High School teacher to speak to the graduating class of Frith Public School. She spoke on "Courtesy" and stated that the good manners of her former pupils made more of an impression on her than did their marks. Pins were given to the graduates: Marjorie Heaton, Valerie Laframboise, Karen Kirkman, David Shuttleworth, James Frith, Lawrence Brindley, Dale Washbrook and Tom Managhan.

TRAGEDY STALKS IN FRITH PUBLIC SCHOOL:

The worst single traffic accident in the history of Essex County, took place about 3.30 p.m. on December 21st, 1966, when a huge truck loaded with gravel overturned onto a loaded school bus at the corner of No. 3 Highway & Walker Road, here in Sandwich South Township. The children were all from our local countryside and all attended Frith Public School. The bus was driven by Jim Levy of Essex and the gravel truck by Marcel Lafrancois of Stony Point. Eight local children lost their lives and twenty others were injured in the mishap. Tragedy hit the family of Mr. & Mrs. Norman O'Neil when they lost their 8 year old son Thomas. Mrs. O'Neil returning to Oldcastle from attending the funeral of her 69 year old mother in Nelson, B. C. didn't know her son was killed until she arrived in Detroit at Metropolitan Airport despite efforts to reach her before departure in Spokane, Wash. The other seven were: Blain, 7 year old son of Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm Mills; Laurie, 6 year old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Leithead; David, 8 year old son of Mr. & Mrs. J. Grant McKee, (Mr. McKee a School Board Trustee); Gary Ross, 8 year old son of Mr. & Mrs. Clemence George Curtis; Anna Marie, 7 year old daughter of Mrs. Anna Dube; Rhonda May, 9 year old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. William McDonald; Susan Irene, 8 year old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Leo Brown. There were thirty children on the bus. Five of the children were out of St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Oldcastle and Rev. E. C. Grey conducted funeral services for all individually. It was a sad Christmas not only for the bereaved families but for the whole community at large. Mrs. Wallace Tiers and Mrs. Sharon Robinson teachers at the school were stricken with grief; a large Christmas tree had been set up in the school all in readiness for the last day of school party so eagerly awaited by all the children the next day which never came.

Charges were laid against the driver of the gravel truck and he was convicted and incarcerated for four years. Headlines glared across the land of the accident and columns were printed in local papers; sympathies came from afar to our Councils and School Board. Windsor Star reporters win first award for spot news reporting, conferred on a team basis for coverage of the Dec. 21st truck-school bus crash at Oldcastle. There were 10 reporters who were recognized and awards presented in Kitchener, April 8th. Their citation read: "As an example of saturation coverage of the Oldcastle disaster of a tragic and dramatic event, the Star's coverage is a tour de force. Every aspect of the story is reported fully, clearly and with compassion. Nor did the Star go beyond the bounds of good taste despite pitfalls".

(91) SCHOOLS OF SANDWICH SOUTH

S. S. No. 11 (FRITH PUBLIC SCHOOL) Cont.

The Frith School disaster brought out the best in the community; neighbors collected up foodstuffs, shared their Christmas goodies with the bereaved families. A monetary collection was taken up also and divided among the parents.

A memorial plaque to commemorate the pupils killed was erected in Frith Public School by Sandwich South Township Council. It was a 16 by 20 inch bronze plaque designed for the municipality and has polished raised letters with a leaf border. Costs were shared by the township school area board. The plaque was erected in the school on the 6th of August, 1967 by W. A. Crowder, handyman for the area schools and on Aug. 7th, 1967, the following day it was dedicated in a service by Rev. E. C. Grey of St. Stephen's Anglican Church. Also, a lovely painting was presented to the school from Mrs. Anna Dube in memory of her daughter Anna Marie sometime later.

A memorial gift was presented by the 15-member Oldcastle Women's Institute to IODE Hospitals on Friday, January 26th, 1968 in the form of a large crib completely furnished with mattress, etc. in memory of the 8 Oldcastle children who lost their lives Dec. 21st., 1966. In the Star picture story and release, Mrs. Wilfred Libby, Health Convener, is shown presenting the cheque to Garnet Pickard, assistant hospital administrator, while Mrs. Teresa Silinsky, director of nursing and Mrs. W. A. Crowder, immediate past president of the Oldcastle Women's Institute look on and admire the lovely crib also shown.

It was during Mrs. Crowder's term of office in 1962 that a fund was established as a centennial fund to be used for whatever was thought suitable as a centennial project in 1967, five years hence. Each year at the annual meeting of the Institute monies were set aside in a separate bank account and at the annual meeting in April, 1967, centennial year, when Mrs. Crowder was retiring from the presidency the meeting was asked to consider what they wanted done with their fund. She suggested giving something in memory of the children and they decided on the crib which she said was to help children get well and recover. We feel it is a suitable memoriam of the area children who lost their lives, she said. The IODE Hospital Board had plans on the drawing board for a pediatric wing to be opened in two years, and Mrs. Crowder hoped the donation would encourage other groups to make donations as well. Until the wing was opened the crib would be put in use in the regular medical hospital. It contained a brass memoriam plaque with suitable inscription and the whole project cost was \$170.00.

Frith's Public School would be phased out in June 1971 by the Essex County School Board as would the remaining schools, Fairplay (No.2); S. S. No.1; and S. S. No. 5 (Charles Collins). S. S. No. 6 (Percy McKee), S. S. No. 4 and S. S. No. 10 had already been closed in June 1970, this bringing an end to all public schools in Sandwich South. Pupils would henceforth be transported by bus to other townships--namely the new A. V. Graham Public School in Tecumseh, the new Sandwich West Elementary School opened last year in 1970 and the north east corner of the township would go to Maplewood in Essex and the northwest corner to Prince Andrew School in Anderton. Mrs. Sharon Robinson was the last principal of Frith School.