

R.C.S.S. NO. 7 Separate School - ST. MARY'S OR COMMONLY
CALLED "RAGTOWN SCHOOL"

Located on No. 3 Highway and Sexton Sideroad (Northeast corner). It had been a log building in the early days prior to the 19th century and was situated across the road from the present site. This was a public school section and converted to a separate school in 1902. Prior to 1960 it was a two-room structure of frame construction. Originally built in 1901 with one room, then in 1918 an additional room was built on to it. The school was completely remodelled and modernized in 1951.

Mr. John McAuliffe attended this school in 1877 and in 1892 went back to teach there. He was one of the area's early pioneers and replaced John Moynahan as clerk for Sandwich South Township in Nov., 1912 and was clerk for 43 years and then was the clerk-treasurer for 17 years. He died at the age of 84 in March, 1956 at Hotel Dieu. Born Feb. 16th, 1872, lived in the area most of his life and in the village since 1930. His son John M. McAuliffe has been a councillor for many years in the township.

R. C. S. S. NO. 7 (Cont.)

Two of the early trustees were Eugene Sullivan and Bob Halford who were pioneer families in the district and many of their offspring are still resident in the area.

Early teachers of which we have record and who taught many years besides Mr. McAuliffe were Miss Nellie Moynahan who taught over 35 years. She had taught the writer's father way back in 1890's at S. S. No. 8 Public School in Maidstone Twp. Miss Agnes McLaughlin taught for many years and also at Public School No. 6. Miss McLaughlin married a Dr. Ryan of Chicago, Ill. and went to live there. They visit here with Dr. Ryan's sister's family, the Gerard McCarthy's.

The Area system for Maidstone & Sandwich South for separate schools came into effect in Dec. 1945 and was named Separate School Union Area. Since that time the three separate schools which comprised this area system, S. S. No. 2 Maidstone, S. S. No. 5 & 8 and S. S. No. 7 Sandwich South have had Nuns or Sisters of St. Joseph teach in the area. They are housed in St. Joseph's Convent House at Maidstone located next to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and transported by bus each day to the schools. The Sisters began to teach here in January, 1930.

For many years the District School Fairs, both Separate & Public were held at this school. Quite a bit of rivalry developed between the different schools in public speaking and sports. Miss McLaughlin with her pupils captured many trophies. There were also awards given for wild flowers, weeds mounted, seeds, garden flowers, vegetables, fruits and animals such as rabbits, calves, etc. which were displayed. Sports abounded and most always a ball game between rival schools.

Public speaking has become popular again in this area, and is now sponsored by the Essex County Ratepayers' and School Area Boards. S. S. No. 7 captured the trophy in 1952, when it was won by Charles Durocher. While he was attending Assumption University (now the University of Windsor) he was also caretaker of S. S. No. 7. He presently resides with his family on North Talbot Road here in the township and taught school for awhile then became an employee of Chrysler Motor Company.

A record player was purchased for the school in 1950 and a piano in 1943. Hydro was installed around 1941 or 2.

May 15th, 1954 - Pictured in the Windsor Star was Catherine Austin then attending St. Mary's Academy and a graduate of S. S. No. 7 who was serving at a tea sponsored by the Alma Mater Association of the Academy.

Oct. 12th, 1957 - Susanne Sexton was pictured with a group of winners at the 10th annual Field Day sponsored by the Essex Rotary Club. Jan. 28th, 1956 - pictured at the Essex Community Hall was Judy Dydzak of Sandwich South and of this school who was one of several pupils taking part in the public speaking contest for Separate Schools in Essex County. Pictured in the Star of Aug. 23rd., 1969 were two Windsor teachers who were taking a summer course in Northern Ontario. They were standing by the huge locomotive train, The Northland's Polar Bear Express. They were Nancy Turton and Theresa Petz. Nancy is the daughter of the Joseph Turtons of No. 3 Highway here at Oldcastle and attended this school. She was a teacher at St. Clair School.

When St. Mary's Separate School was built in 1960 in the village, then the old St. Mary's or No. 7 was called St. Malachy, and was finally phased out of existence when the addition was completed to the new school with an addition of five rooms and a play room in 1963 and the pupils from St. Malachy transported to the new St. Mary's by bus.

January 27th, 1964 - The caption read in the Star - HOW ABOUT A SLIGHTLY - USED SCHOOL? Latest to offer school units for sale by tender was the Roman Catholic School zones 5 & 8 and No. 7 Sandwich South Twp. Offered is the two-room St. Malachy School on Highway No. 3 near Oldcastle. Included are pumps, tanks, toilets and urinals. Items can be tendered for individually or collectively.

Following the notice of tender the school was sold to Emmett McCarthy, a farmer nearby with its site of two acres of land.

Back in the twenties Miss Helen Lormier taught at the school and is now Mrs. Jack Schummer of Detroit.