

Henry R. Hartley &, Sun Parlour School.

Henry Hartley was on the Sandwich South Public-School Board during the 1950's. He served as chairman for many years.

In the late 1950's the #5 school at South Talbot and Malden Road enrollment had expanded and a need for a new 2 room school. The Charles Collins School was built on the south west corner. Leaving the red brick school vacant.

Henry felt a concern for children with mental challenges, as these children had no school to go to and if they did try to go to school, they were left behind as the teacher had grades 1 – 8 to instruct, Therefore, most did not go to school.

He felt that the vacant school (old #.5) could be used for these children. He made contact with Elmer Queen Mayor of Essex and Dave Freeman who was police chief. They made an effort to contact all the parents in Essex County who had children in this situation, and that was the start of Sun Parlour school. At that time, it was not funded by the government, so there were many fund raisers from the community of Essex County. This was by the efforts of parents and all concerned.



I'm not sure how the contact was made, But Henry hired Sonny Rae as the first teacher for Sun Parlour School. One of the early students was found to be deaf and because of this was fitted with hearing aids and able to attend regular school. Sonny Rae was true to her name as she brought hope for many children. The school grew in number and was moved into Essex on Talbot and Cameron. Later a new facility was built on Maidstone Ave behind Essex High school.

Henry and Agnes Hartley loved to attend the Christmas concerts at this school and Henry felt it was an accomplishment that meant a great deal to him. He was granted as a life time member of the Essex County School for the Mentally Retarded.

We must remember the terminology was different in that day and it was not meant to offend anyone.

Written by Ethel Jean Grove

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