

Etta Jean Collins Bennett

From remarks by her daughter Marion Bennett Parr May 2004, and online data

Etta was born in Sandwich South on May 4 1901, to George Burton Collins and Effie Jean Banwell. She married Ralph Emerson Bennett on June 22 1927.

Mr. Bennett died in 1936, leaving her with three small children: Kenneth, Etta Jean (Mrs. Mack Bower) and Marion (Mrs. Al Parr). She decided to go to school to learn hairdressing. She had a shop in downtown Windsor, and later in the Walkerville area. When her father, died she and her children moved to her mother's house in Oldcastle (later Al and Marion Parr's). She set up shop in the house and had many local clients as well as her clients from Walkerville. The price was right: 35 cents for a wash and set! She enjoyed talking with the ladies who were getting their hair done! Marion recalls five-year-old twins coming in for 'perms', which was very unusual.

Mrs. Bennett died December 13 1964.

While Marion had no interest in doing hairdressing, her daughter did and today has her own shop within her home, just like her grandmother did.

McLaughlin, Bridget Agnes: Teacher

Agnes McLaughlin, as she was known, was born in the Lucan area of Ontario on April 26 1898, the fifth of six children. At home in the Ontario Census of 1901 and 1911, by the 1921 Census she is a teacher, boarding with a family in Dawn Township, making \$975.00/ year.

Unable to determine exactly when she came to Sandwich South, we know she did teach at R.C.S.S.#7 at least during the 1924-25 school year, while boarding next door to the school at the home of Andy and Grace McCarthy who became her life-long friends. By 1928, she was married to Dr. Leonard Louis Ryan, a dentist, living in Chicago and had her first child.

She must have made a strong impression on her students because years later, she was spoken about with affection.

Of interest, when her husband's niece Elizabeth Ryan of Lucan took a job in Windsor Agnes encouraged her to meet Grace McCarthy. Elizabeth did make contact with Grace and eventually ended up married to Grace's son and Agnes's former student Gerard McCarthy. Their descendants remain here today.

On a personal note, my mother, Rosemary Halford Sexton, won the prize Miss McLaughlin presented for Department at Christmas 1925. She treasured the book 'Missy' she received, the inside cover signed with a note from Miss McLaughlin.

Agnes retired to Colorado where she died in 1991.

Judy Jobin

Moynahan, Ellen: Teacher

Nellie, as she was known, was born in 1865, the eldest of nine children. She taught for forty-five year at schools in Sandwich South, Rochester Township and Windsor. After retiring at age 67 years she continued to work as a substitute teacher.

She was known as a strict disciplinarian, but was an enthusiastic and active member of the school and wider community.

Nellie died in 1940.

Nellie Cole Turton

The Cole Family were pioneers, coming to this area in 1830 from Ireland, via Boston. Nellie was the third of seven children. She was born at Pelton on May 27, 1881. The first wedding in the current church was that of her parents, William Cole and Catherine Driscoll on November 24 1874. Best man was his brother, Abraham Cole, the first reeve of Sandwich South.

Nellie was tall, five feet eight inches.

She was a milliner, taking the ferry across the river to Detroit to make designer hats.

In 1903 she met her husband, Leonard Turton. She had two children, Joe and Ann. Her husband spent ten years in bed with tuberculosis until he died in 1923 when Joe was only thirteen years old. He had been a switchman for the railroad. When he became ill, they moved from Glengarry to Walker Road in Oldcastle.

Nellie's sister paid her tuition and she became a midwife and practical nurse. She worked with Dr. J.D. McDonald, delivering many babies for local families (Russ Lepain's, Joe McCarthy's, Dan McLean's) as well as doing tooth extractions and tonsillectomies. Following a delivery, Nellie would move into the house for a period of time to do housework, canning, whatever needed to be done. Nothing is known of the fees she was paid for her services.

She loved family, and gardening. She was an active member of St. Mary's Church, Maidstone and looked after the altar linens.

Nellie died on July 6 1971, beloved by her family, church and community.

Payne, Louisa: Nov 1839-Dec 21 1938

Louisa's parents, Lewis and Millie, were slaves in Georgia, where she was born. She was smuggled into Canada where they found freedom in the 1800's. They came to Sandwich South and built a cabin on Lot#17 Concession 9, north of the Baseline Road between the 9th and 10th Concessions. Louisa never married and lived there until her death at age 97. She is buried in Fairbairn Cemetery.

She was a big lady with a big heart. During the Depression when so many struggled, she always had a pot of stew on the stove and fed many children from #1 School that was at the corner of the Baseline Road and 9th Concession. The children were welcome to play with her dogs and cats and she'd give them apples off the trees she had planted. (The trees are still there) Jim Ure Sr. remembered turning her records by hand when her Victrola was broken.

She had a gander named Billy. She would sit on the rail fence and whistle and he'd come running!

Whipple Grocery delivered once a week, and Clare Harris delivered meat.

She grew beautiful flowers. Period clothing she had is believed to be in the Black Historical Museum in Amherstburg.

In the mid 1930's, she was in danger of losing her farm. Her neighbour, Raymond O'Keefe, paid off the \$300.00 mortgage and she stayed there until her death in 1938.

Information for her death certificate was provided by Raymond O'Keefe who gave his relationship as 'just friend'. He must have been a dear friend, as she left her farm to him and his brother John.

Most of this information was provided in 2004 by Ted Ure and Raymond O'Keefe's son Michael who subsequently owned the farm.

In 2020, Michael O'Keefe reports that the apples tree are now gone. Only the walnut trees planted by the Payne Family remain to indicate where the home was.

Judy Jobin April 2020