

### CENTENARY OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL 1818-1918

The celebration of the Centennial of the Charlotte County Grammar School was held in the Assembly Room of the Prince Arthur School on Friday evening, and a full report will appear in our next issue. We have been supplied with an advance copy of the "Historical Sketch" by M. N. Cockburn, Esq., K. C., which is as follows:

THE friends present to-night must suffer a disappointment, if they are expecting from me anything that could be at all regarded as a proper history of the Charlotte County Grammar School. It was only ten days ago that I was asked to take part in this very important and most interesting event. It can therefore be readily understood, that a great injustice would be done to this institution, whose traditions bear such unmistakable marks of age, distinction, and importance, to speak of the few disconnected facts and incidents, to which I shall be able to refer to-night, as "A History of the Charlotte County Grammar School."

To prepare anything that would approach a real history of an institution such as the Charlotte County Grammar School, covering a period of one hundred years, in ten days' time, would be a task far beyond me and would palpably fail to do justice to the school; to its antecedents; to its splendid accomplishments and to the noble army of great men and splendid women, who have for a whole century taught and studied in that school. It is regrettable in the extreme, that a proper history of this School has never been written, and even more regrettable that all the records and data, from which such a work might have been compiled, have not been preserved.

The Acts of the Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick dealing with this School, and some records still to be found in the Office of the Board of Education at Fredericton, give some small degree of information respecting the establishment and working of the Charlotte County Grammar School, but the events and facts that would have been most interesting to record in a properly prepared history of the school, have been allowed to perish and be forever lost, in the passing of the older generations of St. Andrews' people, without in any form leaving behind them a record of the knowledge they had on that subject; which is quite as painfully true of many important events connected with the Town of St. Andrews, its first settlement, its commercial growth and development, its ups and downs as an industrial centre, and its transformation into Canada's greatest summer playground.

An attempt at this date to gather material for a proper historical sketch of the Charlotte County Grammar School, convinces one very forcibly of the fatality of delay, and it is surprising how very little information is now at hand from which to complete a connected tale of this ancient establishment. Records that give any information along the required lines are indeed very scarce, and the older people from whom so much valuable information could have been obtained and preserved have passed along to that County, from whose bourne no traveller ever returns.

From the best information I can obtain every pupil who attended the School, under the teaching of the first school Master, and, with very few exceptions, all who attended under the Master who was the second to teach that school, have gone hence.

The Public Statutes of New Brunswick show that this School was established by an Act of the Legislature, passed March 11th, 1816, entitled, "AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN THE TOWN OF SAINT ANDREWS."

The preamble of the Act reads oddly enough, to those who live in these advanced days of educational advancement and necessity, in these days when education constitutes one of the indispensable necessities in the life of every man and woman. The preamble sets forth— "WHEREAS EDUCATION OF THE YOUTH IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN SOCIETY, AND PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THAT SUBJECT HAS BY EXPERIENCE BEEN FOUND TO BE ATTENDED WITH THE MOST BENEFICIAL EFFECTS."

The Rector of St. Andrews Church (as it was called in the Act referred to), in the Parish of St. Andrews, for the time being, together with Robert Pagan, John Campbell, John Dinn, Colin Campbell, David W. Jack, Harris Hatch, Thomas Wyrer Jr., and John Strang, were named as the first Board of Trustees and Directors of the School, by the name of "THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS OF THE PUBLIC GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN THE TOWN OF SAINT ANDREWS." It was also provided that the Rector was always to be the President of the Board. And those were substantially the conditions, under which the School was conducted until the coming into force of the Free School Act in 1872, when by the then new Legislation, the St. Andrews Grammar School, in common with the Grammar Schools then existing in all other Counties in this Province, was merged in and became a part of the Free School system of

the Province, since which time it has been known and legally designated as the "Charlotte County Grammar School."

Until the adoption of the Free School Law, which was passed by the Legislature on May 17th 1871, and by the terms of the Act, came into operation on the 1st day of January 1872, the Grammar School, in St. Andrews seems to have been entirely distinct from the other School system then in vogue, so much so indeed that Patrick Clinch, who was the first school Inspector for Charlotte County appointed by the Government, and whose home was in St. George, when making his annual report to the Government in 1854, expressed his appreciation of the great courtesy that had been shown to him by "THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNORS OF THE ACADEMY AT ST. ANDREWS," in permitting him to pay a visit to the aforesaid Academy.

The Act of incorporation provided that a Government grant of £100 should be made annually, in aid of the Grammar School, towards the support of a Master, and £200 to aid in the erection of a school building. But it was provided that as soon as the annual income of said Grammar School should, in whatever manner the same might arise, amount to £800, then the annual Grant of £100 should cease.

There is now no available source from which to learn the exact date when the erection of the Grammar School building was commenced, but inasmuch as the Act authorizing the erection of such building was passed in 1816 and the School was opened in the year 1818, it would seem to be a fair inference, that the Old Grammar School building was erected about 1817.

The building as originally erected, or the first Grammar School, was a square building in form, with a hip roof; from the centre of the roof arose a bell tower of the same form as the main building, and that was surmounted with a peaked roof, from the apex of which a flag staff with a ball on its top pointed skyward. The door opened into a hall, on either side of which was a class room, and at the end another door opened into the school room. Just opposite the last mentioned door in the main room, and against the wall, was a sort of pulpit, with a reading board on the front, into which the Master used to ascend when hearing his classes, and especially for the hearing of classes in translation of Greek and Latin.

At some subsequent time, the date of which I have not been able to ascertain from any source, an addition was made to the original building, on the end facing on King Street. All present will know, that the old Grammar School building stood on the same site now occupied by this Prince Arthur School building. The addition referred to comprised the space afterwards occupied and known to the present generations, as the cloak rooms and class-room, as the same were at the time the old building was abandoned. In making the addition referred to, the exterior of the building was changed in form, and a "V" roof put thereon, with the gable end facing on King Street. A small bell tower was placed on the eastern end of the building, from which for many generations, the old Grammar School bell, which is in evidence here to-night, rang out its call to summon the Grammar School pupils to their daily tasks. The old building when enlarged and remodelled increased the size of the main school room, by the removal of what were originally the hall and class rooms referred to in this description. In that enlarged and remodelled condition, the old Grammar School building served as a school building, under whose roof many bright minds were trained and developed, and many who afterwards became prominent and distinguished men and women, passed their graduation.

In 1912 the old building was removed from its original site, after ninety-four years of service, to a place on the lot below that on which it sat so many years, and is now crumbling into decay, a standing witness of the work of the iconoclast, and if its inner walls could be made to speak, much that would interest and amuse could be learned, which now, alas, can never be known.

In 1811, the Rev. John Cassills, a Presbyterian Divine, was sent out from Scotland to teach the Academy at King's College, Nova Scotia. That was then a denominational school, under the management of the Anglican Church, and the governing body did not feel altogether comfortable about a Presbyterian clergyman moulding the minds and lives of the youths of their faith, and a knowledge of the existence of that feeling caused the teacher to chafe slightly under the cords that bound him to a school, and to a people who loved and honored the man, but had doubts as to the soundness of his theology. The opening of the Grammar School at St. Andrews, and the need of a teacher to take charge thereof, afforded Mr. Cassills an opportunity of relieving his mind on a difficult problem, against which he had fought for seven years; and at the sacrifice of income, which in after years he must have sorely needed to rear and educate a family of twelve children with which God blessed him in his married life, he accepted the appointment to the principality of what was then the "St. Andrews Grammar School."

In 1818 Mr. Cassills moved from Windsor, Nova Scotia, to St. Andrews, and took up his residence in what was afterwards known as the "Donaldson House," which occupied a site on the upper part of the Block immediately

above the Grammar School Building, which Block is now the property of Lady Tilley.

The remainder of Mr. Cassills' life was spent in Charlotte County, and during that time he built and occupied a dwelling on Minister's Island, on a site that is still spoken of, by some of the older people, as the "Cassills' field." He also built and occupied the dwelling house on the St. John Road which was lately owned and occupied by the late Mr. Robert McLaren and his family. He also owned, occupied, and died in the dwelling house at Vardon's Point, Bocabec, which has lately been remodelled and is now owned by Mr. Angus Holt.

At the opening of the school in 1818, it was exclusively for male pupils in the ad-

late Honorable Senator Arthur Hill Gillmor and the late Mr. Charles O'Neill.

In 1836 the Rev. Mr. Cassills resigned his charge of the Grammar School, to resume his work in the ministry, and assumed charge of a Presbyterian circuit in this County, with churches at Bocabec, Whittier's Ridge, and Mascarene, wherein he labored faithfully and well until his death on July 18th, 1850. His remains rest beside those of his wife, under the shadow of the spire of Greenock Presbyterian Church in St. Andrews.

Mr. Cassills bore the reputation of being a man of strong scholarly attainments. His sermons and writings, many of which are still in existence, show he had a profound knowledge of, and took a deep interest in astronomy. While in the

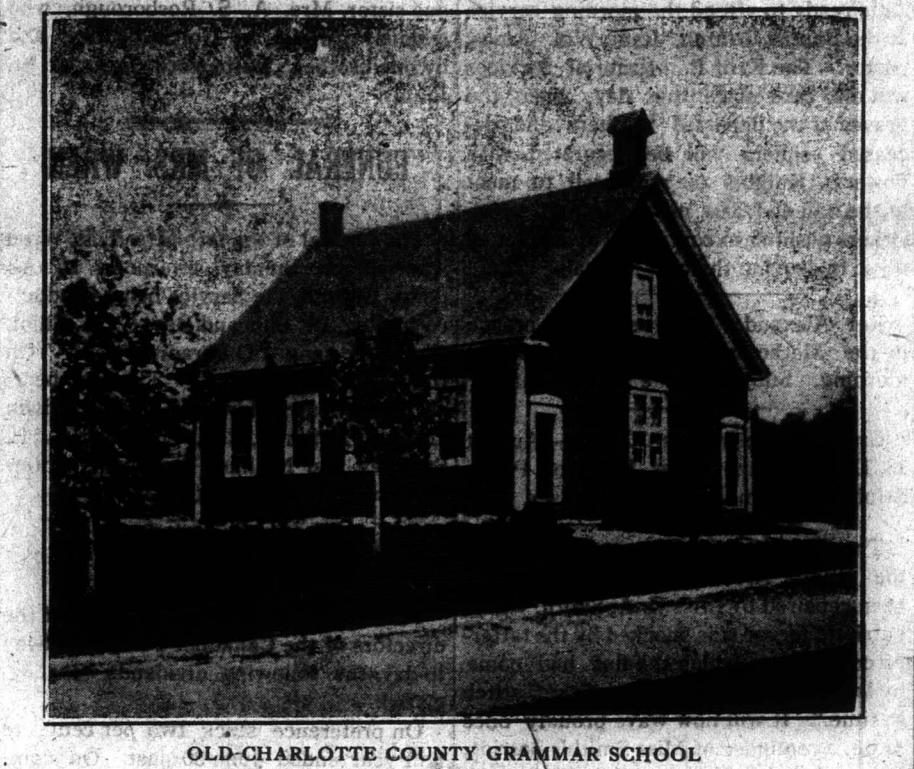
School, to which I feel I must limit myself in this narrative.

One incident, however, which is directly connected with the school and has been given to me from a reliable source, may be worthy of touching upon as I pass along. It is connected with the late Fred A. Morrison, who was a pupil at the time. He afterwards went into the legal profession during the short time he lived, and was a law partner with the late Judge King of the Supreme Court of Canada. At the time referred to the late Dr. Jerome Alley was the Rector, and as a Trustee of the school, was paying an official visit. Dr. Alley was a short and very fat man, and while examining the school at the closes of the term he asked Fred Morrison to spell the word "Fatally," and Mr. Morrison proceeded to divide the word in syllables and spelled it thus; "Fat, fat, Ally, ally." Dr. Alley was wise enough to take no notice of the play that had been made on the letters of his name, but the story is worthy of repeating, as evidence of the remarkably swift wit on the part of young Morrison, who at that time was scarcely fourteen years of age. This incident may have occurred in the School of Mr. Smith, rather than the school of Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Morrison was succeeded as Head Master in the School by Mr. Randal E. Smith in 1849. Mr. Smith at that time was a young man, fresh from King's College, his home being on Prince Edward Island. One of his pupils has spoken of him in this manner: He was then about thirty-five years of age, and was what would be truly called a fine looking man. His hair was brown, face full with side whiskers, average height, and a form inclined to fullness. His step was light and sprightly, and tradition told how he had put to flight two big loots who, for a fancied grievance, had treacherously taken him unawares. His learning was of the first order; he was an excellent English scholar, a good French scholar, and was proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; he was a capital arithmetician and mathematician, and taught navigation to many a youth who afterwards was destined to command the ships that sailed the briny deep. While playful and jolly at recess or before session, he was a strict disciplinarian, once the bell had announced the hour for work. He was noted for impartiality, and the son of the aristocrat word "catch it" just as quickly as the poor scholar who was getting his classics for making the fires or brooming the floor, if the rules had been infringed and a castigation was required. It was the custom in Mr. Smith's school to begin the morning session by reading a Chapter from the New Testament, each pupil continuing the text as his name was called, and the Catholic boy was obliged to bring his Douay for that purpose, though it would have been handier and cost small quails of conscience to use his neighbours King James Version. He disliked anything that smacked of bigotry, and no fault would meet with more severe retribution than the one of sneering at another's religion.

In 1855 Mr. Smith was ordained Deacon in the Anglican Church, and acted for some years as assistant to the Rev. Dr. Ketchum, but continued teaching the Grammar School until 1868, when he left St. Andrews and became the Rector of St. Marks Church in the Parish of Saint George, in succession to the Rev. Mr. McEwen. He died in July 1899, much regretted, not only by his own flock, but by

all denominations. A young man just from college, he at first had pretty hard work controlling a rather rough and pugnacious lot of pupils, who had been brought up to believe that truth and pluck would always win out, and his hasty punishments without proper investigation, soon precipitated a revolt, which happily resulted in a very much better understanding between scholars and teacher. Mr. Smith had severely punished one of the older boys for a slight offence, the others thought the punishment entirely out of proportion to the offence, and thus the trouble came about. During recess Mr. Smith often went to his lodging, only a block from this school, leaving the doors open. On this occasion one of the boys, named Grant, had left his cap in the building, and finding the door fastened on the inside, started to climb in at the window; here he was repulsed by a boy named Smith, a brother of the Master, who spat upon his head. However, he managed to get in and looking about for a way to punish his aggressor, he thought him of the cellar under the building. This cellar was entered by a heavy trap door in the floor, and being only used as a receptacle for fuel during the winter, was consequently filled with cobwebs and black dust; and as there were no windows it was perfectly dark when the trap was closed. Opening this trap door, he caught Smith and thrust him down, then closing the door, left him a prisoner. When the Master returned and had taken his place at his desk, loud cries of "let me up!" were heard coming from the cellar. "Who is down there?" the teacher said, "Me," was the response; and who is me? "Smith"; "Who put you down there?" "Grant." "Go and let him up Grant." Grant went to the trap, threw it open, and seizing Smith, whose head reached nearly to the floor, by his long hair dragged him out. His appearance, covered with dust and cobwebs, was too ludicrous, and a roar of laughter greeted his arrival. Smith told his tale, and Grant was ordered to take off his jacket, when he received such a horse-whipping as would be looked upon with horror at the present day, and which left long white wales across his shoulders and around the arm stretched out to protect his face and body. After school was dismissed (Continued on page seven.)



OLD CHARLOTTE COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

vanced grades, and Mr. Cassills' pupils, for the first years of his term, were very largely made up of sons of the United Empire Loyalists and their descendants. That splendid class of men, who, three quarters of a century ago, were the very life-blood of all St. Andrews' industries, whose enterprise and industry placed St. Andrews, in their day, at the head of the commercial Towns of New Brunswick; lined the water front with wharves and warehouses and taxed the same to full capacity with shipments to and fro; filled the harbor with ships which carried on a very large trade between here and the Old Country and between here and the West Indies; who promoted and built the first line of railway in New Brunswick; whose ability, integrity and enterprise placed them foremost among the men of New Brunswick, and who set a pace for the commercial life of St. Andrews, which their descendants failed to maintain, were graduates from Mr. Cassills' school.

How interesting it would be, if we tonight could read a list of the names who responded to Mr. Cassills' first roll call, on the opening of the Old Grammar School in 1818. Unfortunately there is no such record extant, and I have been able to ascertain the names of only a few who were his pupils during the twenty years that he was Head Master in that school, from 1818 to 1838. During that period, however, the late Honorable Harris Hatch raised and educated a large family. There were five boys whose names I remember, from information given to me years ago by some of the older people. They were, Harris, Wellington, Christopher, Edward, and Charles. Mr. Cassills took delight in telling of an incident that occurred in connexion with the Hatch family, while the boys were in his school. Perhaps there is only one person living to-day who remembers hearing Mr. Cassills relate this tale, and that is Miss Jane Kaven, who now lives in Bocabec, who has seen ninety summers, and whose recollections of Mr. Cassills are still very distinct. The Honorable Mr. Hatch was, of course, solicitous for the welfare and future of his boys, and in discussing their possibilities with Mr. Cassills, said he felt that Harris, Wellington, Christopher, and Edward were boys of strong intellect and would easily make their way in life; Charles, however, he thought to be of weaker mental caliber, and he asked Mr. Cassills if he did not think he had better educate Charles for the ministry. Whether it was because of the views expressed by Mr. Cassills in reply to Mr. Hatch's inquiry, or some entirely different cause, Mr. Charles Hatch never attained to the sacred calling which was then his father's ambition. Another pupil who attended the school under Mr. Cassills, was the late Mr. Thomas Thompkins Wyrer, who was a familiar figure on the Streets of St. Andrews half a century ago. Mr. Wyrer was a godly man, and did much good in the community, in his own way, but like Mr. Charles Hatch, he could not be classed as a man of strong mental powers. For the purpose of this narrative, I am assuming that Colonel Wyrer, the father of Thomas Thompkins Wyrer, like the Hon. Mr. Hatch, in the case of his son, Charles, thought it would be his paternal duty to place his son in some occupation where brain power would not play much part. He, therefore, educated his son, Thomas, as a lawyer, and Mr. Wyrer became a member of the New Brunswick Bar, but his mind and thoughts ran in too saintly a groove to continue long in that profession.

The last two survivors among the men who attended Mr. Cassills' school, were the

Grammar School he successfully taught navigation, and many a sea captain who afterwards sailed on the five oceans, obtained the whole of their theoretical education while in his school. He spoke fluently and wrote freely in seven languages. He certainly was himself a scholar of a very high order, but the opinion did prevail among some of his pupils that he did not possess the ability to impart knowledge to the same degree as possessed by some of his successors in the school.

In 1838 Mr. Daniel Smith Morrison succeeded Mr. Cassills as Head Master of the Grammar School. As far back as that time we have evidence of the fact that nick-names were common and in use, as they are at the present day, for history records that this new Head Master was given the name of "Long Morrison," or "Sugar Tongue," from the fact that he was very thin, had long legs and a very shor body.

Mr. Morrison continued in charge of the School from 1839 to 1849, when he went to the United States, became a citizen of that Republic, entered the legal profession, and was appointed a Supreme Court Judge in the State of California, which position he held at the time of his death. Some years before his death, and after his elevation to the Supreme Court bench, he was visited in California by our worthy and much esteemed fellow townsman and one of his former pupils, Mr. Henry O'Neill. Mr. Morrison really taught the Grammar School only ten years, as he spent one year from 1845 to 1846 in England, on leave of absence, and during that period the school was in charge of Mr. Charles Bliss, who afterwards became an Anglican clergyman. During the time that Mr. Bliss was in charge of the school the number of pupils in attendance sensibly decreased, as it is said he lacked the magnetism and personality of Mr. Morrison. Upon Mr. Morrison's return, however, the vacant seats were speedily filled and the attendance became so large that an usher had to be engaged. Many changes were made in the management of the school and in the system of instruction. Trial by jury was instituted, so that no boy accused of misconduct should be unfairly punished.

I have obtained the names of some of the men who were students under Mr. Morrison, and no doubt many of them will be familiar to some of those present to-night. The list includes:—Stannus Jones, Martin Jones, Vernon Jones, the Hon. B. R. Stevenson, Dr. J. F. Stevenson, Rev. Fletcher Pickles, George Miller, John Miller, Robert Miller, J. Sydney McMaster, J. Ambrose Street, Arthur Street, Geo. W. Street, W. H. Street, W. D. Aymar, Mathew J. Elliot, Andrew Elliot, William Austin, Geo. Buckstaff, John Smith, Henry O'Neill, Rev. Francis O'Neill, James O'Neill, Hugh Stoop, James Stoop, Darius Ingraham, Patrick Quinn, Thomas McVay, Daniel McVay, John, Dunn, B. O. Hathaway, John B. Baisom, John Boyd, James Maloney, E. S. Polleys, R. Melville Jack, John Lochary, Charles Eaton, Fred Eaton, Donald Berry, Fred A. Morrison, John Campbell, George Mowat, Thomas Berry, Alexander Berry, Robert Stevenson, Capt. Nelson Clarke, Capt. John Wren, Alexander McClair.

Very few indeed on the above list are still living, but we are glad to number among our citizens in St. Andrews three whose names have been given to me in the above list, and who are with us to-night, Mr. Henry O'Neill, Mr. James Stoop and Mr. E. S. Polleys.

I could give some slight account of those whose names are above given, in their after life, but that would be personal history, not history of the Grammar

School, to which I feel I must limit myself in this narrative.

One incident, however, which is directly connected with the school and has been given to me from a reliable source, may be worthy of touching upon as I pass along. It is connected with the late Fred A. Morrison, who was a pupil at the time. He afterwards went into the legal profession during the short time he lived, and was a law partner with the late Judge King of the Supreme Court of Canada. At the time referred to the late Dr. Jerome Alley was the Rector, and as a Trustee of the school, was paying an official visit. Dr. Alley was a short and very fat man, and while examining the school at the closes of the term he asked Fred Morrison to spell the word "Fatally," and Mr. Morrison proceeded to divide the word in syllables and spelled it thus; "Fat, fat, Ally, ally." Dr. Alley was wise enough to take no notice of the play that had been made on the letters of his name, but the story is worthy of repeating, as evidence of the remarkably swift wit on the part of young Morrison, who at that time was scarcely fourteen years of age. This incident may have occurred in the School of Mr. Smith, rather than the school of Mr. Morrison.

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