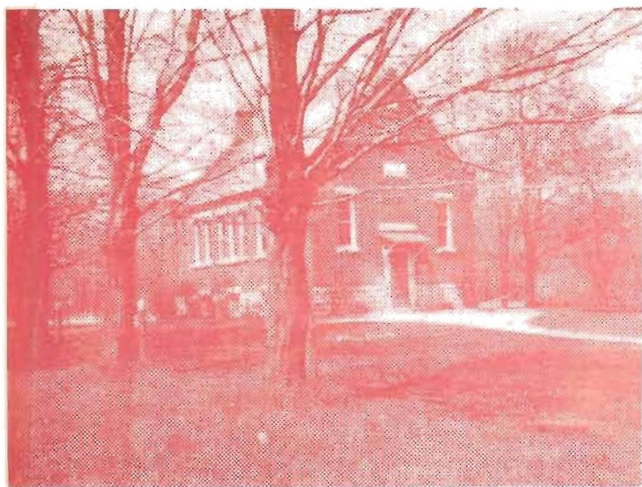


# Bennington School



S. S. No. 3, WEST ZORRA

1864



1966

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## HISTORY OF BENNINGTON SCHOOL

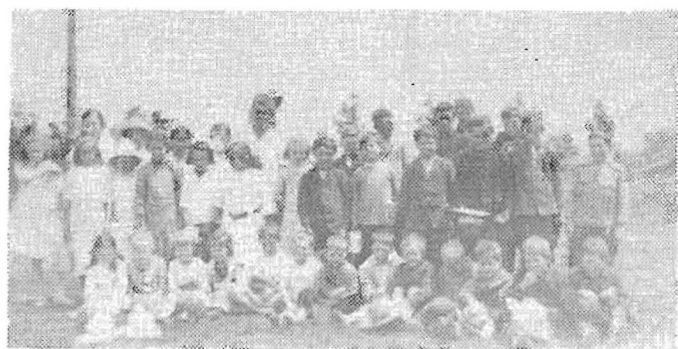
Bennington is said to have derived its name from Benson Pelton, who at a very early period in Bennington's history, owned considerable land in the vicinity, including the land on which the first buildings were situated. Some say too, that Bennington was named by some pioneer of the district who had come from Bennington, Vermont. The Pelton family originally came from the New England States. There is a record of a quit claim deed dated 1846 showing that Benson Pelton sold to George Duncan the fifty acres of land on the corner of which the cheese factory now stands.

Donald McKay was the first merchant of Bennington. His store was situated on the south-west corner of the intersection at the 2nd concession. He lived in one end of the building and kept store in the other end where he also conducted a Sunday School class. Joseph Fleming, a weaver, was an outstanding citizen of Bennington in those days. He wove all the material in the garments worn by people for miles around.

The early school district of this community comprised about all the territory now included in school sections 3 and 6. The school, known as Pelton's school, and a cottage for the teacher stood on an acre of land on the south-west corner of Lot 20, concession 3, facing north. The schoolhouse was a small frame building which accommodated about 100 boys and girls, seated on benches or anything else available. The class was presided over by James Youill, very harsh and cruel. No punishment was too severe for this man to inflict on any of his pupils, including his own daughter.

In those days each ratepayer was assessed so much wood for heating the school, according to the number of children he had attending the school. The story is told that one family who lived 4 miles away, and whose father was in arrears for his share of wood, was not allowed to warm themselves at the stove in winter. Money transactions at that time were still in pounds, shillings and pence.

In 1864, School Section No. 3 of West Zorra was organized. The following is the report of the record of organization:-



Specifications of materials necessary and work to be done in the erection and construction of a school house to be erected on lot 21, con, 1, West Zorra, for the Trustees of School Section No. 3.

The building to be brick, walls one brick thick and to be bound every fifth course. And to be erected in accordance with the drawings and this specification, to be 40 feet long, and 27 feet wide, and the brick work to be 11 feet 6 inches high and to be placed on a stone foundation.

Excavate for foundation walls the required width and two feet deep or until suitable foundation be got, below the ground line and use earth for levelling around the building. Build foundation walls of rubble masonry 20 inches thick and 1 foot 6 inches above the ground line, bind sufficiently and face neatly on the outside from the groundline upwards. Form three apertures for ventilation in each flank and protect same from vermin by a grating or perforated sheet iron. A smoke flue to be built at one end commencing at a proper distance below the ceiling, and a thimble to be put in to receive stove pipe, the flue to be 2 feet by 9 inches inside, and to be raised to a common height above the roof. Partitions to be built in the ordinary way and to be placed where shown in the drawing,

The ceiling to be lathed with sawed or split pine lath in the usual way, to be well opened and nailed and two hatches to be made in the ceiling, and finish the ceiling, walls and partitions with two good coats of plaster using fresh burnt lime and sharp, clean sand, the plaster at the back of the Master's platform to be black with a hard finish from the top of the sheeting 6 feet across the room and 4 feet high. Strips to be securely fastened on the walls between the windows for hanging maps or cards on, 4 inches wide and beaded on both edges. The walls of school room, entrance and apparatus room to be sheeted as high as windows.

The floor to be laid with 2 inch pine plank well seasoned, free from black or rotten knots and to be tongued and grooved.

One beam to be placed lengthwise of the building 12 x 12 of sound rock elm or red beech in the centre

and to be properly supported with 2 stone pillars as shown in the drawing, sunk as deep in the ground as the foundation walls. Pine joists to be of good sound material 10 x 2 and properly bridged, about 20 inches in centre.

Beams 9 x 6, plates 6 x 6, joisting 6 x 2, 16 in centres, rafters 5 x 2, roof to be constructed as shown by drawing with two principals and purlins. The roof to be covered with inch pine boards laid in courses close from the saw ( no two heading joints to be consecutively on the same rafter) and shingles 4 or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches (according to the length of them) to the weather, and cover the ridge with saddle and roll. Frame the rafters to overhang the walls 18 inches and case the same with planed inch boards, with frieze board and bed moulding,

Windows to be  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet from floor, to be 12 lights 14 x 10 glass, sashes to be  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches thick. All sashes to be primed before being glazed, and to be set and glazed with good German sheet or Crown glass to be well bedded and neatly puttied. Frames to be prepared to receive  $1\frac{3}{8}$  shutters and to have all necessary parting slips, stops and beads. Outside doors and top lights to be 2 inches thick. Doors 6 feet 6 inches high, top lights 14 x 10 glass, 4 panels in each door, and to be hung with 3 patent 4 inch butts, and to have a good strong English lock on each, and heavy moulding on the outside. To have suitable frames with oak sills not less than 3 inches thick. Inside doors to be  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches thick, raised and square, to have suitable rabbeted jambs and to be hung with 4 inch butts and fastened with latches as the trustees may direct. All doors and windows to be finished on the inside with heavy 4 inch band mouldings.

Teacher's platform to be raised  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches above the floor and a suitable seat fixed against the wall 5 feet long. Pupil's desks and seats to be prepared and fixed as shown by drawing. Pupils' desks to be braced as shown.

Three shelves to be put up in each lobby 9 inches wide and 9 inches apart, also 2 strips in each lobby securely fastened on the walls and clothes hooks properly fastened onto them 10 inches between hooks.

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All joiner work outside, and window and outside door frames, also inside doors and door frames and windows inside to be painted with two coats of best lead and oil paint. Outside doors to be grained. All the work shown on the drawings or herein specified, or whatever is necessary to complete the building, although the same may not be with sufficient clearness shown or expressed, is to be done, as far as the intent and meaning of the drawings and specifications will warrant, the one mutually to illustrate the other

All material to be of good and approved quality, and all lumber for doors, sashes and other joiner's work including desks to be country clear, and well seasoned, and all the work in all the departments to be executed in a good substantial and workmanlike manner, to the entire satisfaction of the trustees or their superintendant.

Additions to the above: Sashes to have suitable catches to fasten them when opened either up or down.

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At the opening of the new school on July 20, 1864 Rev. Donald McKenzie conducted religious services. Money for the new school was raised by levying an amount on ratable property in the section. In November 1864, Robert McKay was appointed the first auditor for the school section. In July 1865, arrangements were made for digging a well. John McLeod furnished all the firewood for the school for \$6 a cord in 1867. About this time too, a \$10 reward was offered for the conviction of 'some malicious, evil-disposed person or persons who had broken 14 panes of glass and committed other depredations within the school'.

Some of the early settlers at this date were: Andrew Richardson, Duncan Bain, Duncan McGillavray, William Oliver, John Andison, William Wilson, William McLeod, Robert Duncan, James Glendinning, Colin Sutherland, Joseph Ross, Donald McKay, Robert McLeod, John S. McDonald, James Pelton, Augustus Wilson, James Baker, Hugh Stewart George McIntosh, A. Baker, George Matheson, James McConkey, James McCorquodale, D. Morrison, Cornelius McCorquodale, Robert Murray, John Munroe.

On March 2, 1906, it was moved by William McLeod





and seconded by Alex Kindness that a new school with a basement be built during 1906. The new site chosen was on the corner of the west half of lot 21, con. 2, across the road from the old school. J. E. Wilderhold, St. Marys, was the architect chosen to draw the plans. The property was bought from Thomas Glendinning for \$90. The contractor was George McKay Framer. Cost of the new school was \$9,636.60. Brick for the building was drawn from Zorra Station. Mr. Geddes, Embro, installed a furnace for \$100. The trustees insured the new school for \$2200 and contents for \$400 as compared with insurance for the old school at \$500 taken out with Middlesex Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

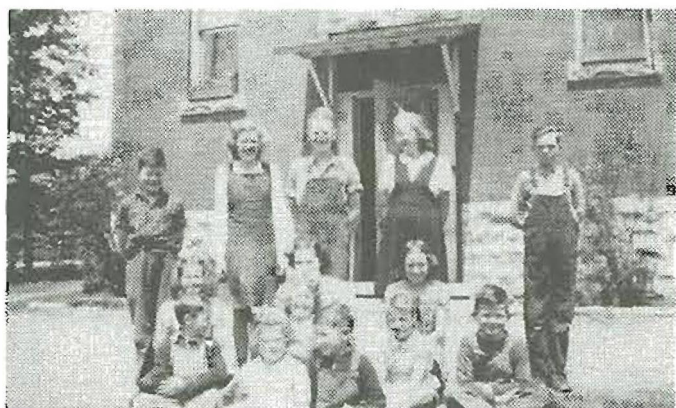
In 1910, forty maple trees were planted around the school-yard. By 1910 too, F. Thompson was delivering coal to the school. At this time as well, George Smith and William --- along with Robert McLeod urged that a library be provided with a purchase of \$30 worth of books. In 1912, a flag-pole was added to the school grounds.

In 1916, during Miss Philips service, the Golden Rule books were purchased. The study of Agriculture was begun in 1917. A fence was erected around the school-yard in 1918.

By this time a trustee organization had been formed and so in 1921, George Glendinning attended a Trustees Association meeting in Woodstock and Robert McLeod was delegate to a meeting of the Trustees Association in Toronto.

At a meeting on February 3, 1921, the chairman and secretary of the school board were asked to attend a meeting in Embro regarding operation of a Continuation School. In 1925, weather stripping was put around the windows, and the following year a bell was put on the school. For \$100, a new door was hung, in 1928, and in 1929, a new cabinet and map cupboards were purchased. Chemical toilets were installed in 1930. It is believed the hydro was installed about 1930 as well.

Household Science instruction was begun in 1934 when Miss Helen McIntosh was teacher. Equipment for hot lunches was purchased - a stove (which is still



in operation), pans and dishes. In 1935, a sink was installed and agricultural equipment in the form of rakes, hoes and shovels helped improve the appearance of the school grounds. In addition the pupils painted the fence posts. Manual Training equipment was added in 1936, including a work bench, tools and a tool cupboard. In January 1937, a piano was purchased for \$100 with Miss Miss Florence Youngs of Youngsville being engaged as music teacher.

The pupils varnished the desks and did other painting inside and out in 1938.

During Miss Anna McBurney's Service, Religious instruction was begun by Rev. Russel May on November 13, 1941. This practice was discontinued sometime during 1944-45.

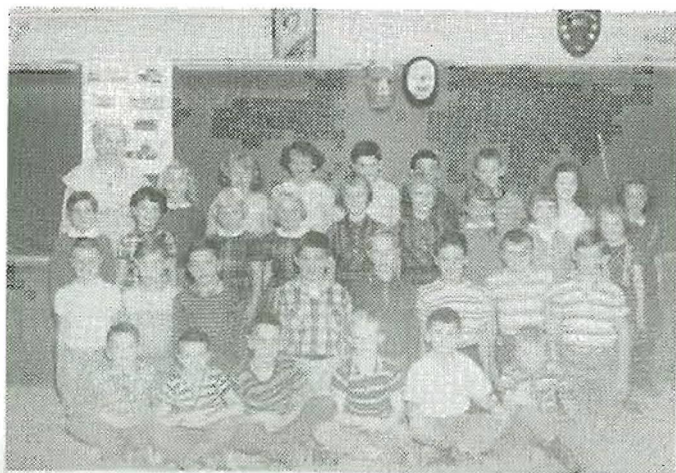
The West Zorra Township School Area was elected December, 1944 and began operating as such in January 1945. Mr. Donald was the last local 1945. Mr. Donald McCorquodale was the last local secretary with the other trustees being the late Osmond Murray and James Smith.

Improvements since 1945 include:- New roof, new desks on skids, a pressure system, flush toilets, water in the class-room, stoker, a new floor, removal of the platform, installation of book cupboards under the lowered blackboards, redecorating inside several times

In 1957, S.S. No. 3 won a trophy in the West Zorra Hockey Tournament held in Woodstock, having been coached by Alex Whittaker.

In 1963, Mrs. Lillian Cripps improved the playground facilities by obtaining a picnic table, teeter totters and a slide.

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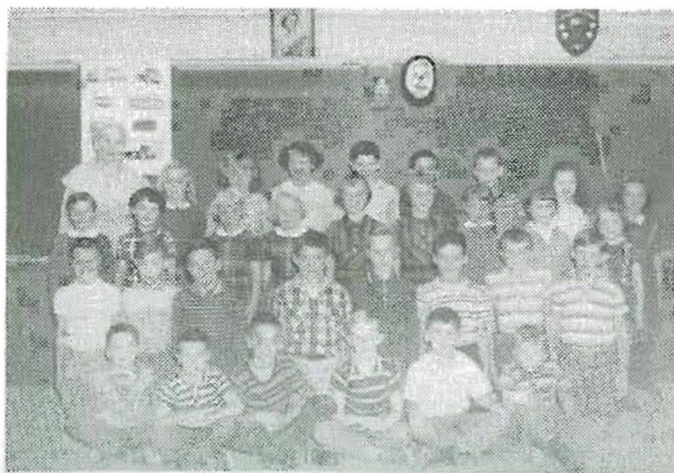
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### MUSIC TEACHERS

Miss Florence Youngs	Mrs. Roy Fader
Miss Marge Youngs	Miss Jean McCall
Miss Marguerite Murray	Miss Doris Redman
Mr. Elliot	Miss Dora Harrison
Miss Ethel McCorquodale	

### SECRETARIES

1864 Augustus Wilson	1893 Wm. McCorquodale
1865 Donald McKay	1896 Robert Matheson
1866 Wm. McDonald	1901 W. J. McKay
1868 James Glendinning	1905 Wm. McCorquodale
1870 Wm. McKay	1906 R. H. Darling
1871 Wm. Oliver	1910 W. J. McKay
1873 Augustus Wilson	1912 John Matheson
1874 John McDonald	1913 Wm. Darling
1877 J. H. Ross	1914 Robt McCorquodale
1878 James Glendinning	1915 Wm. Darling
1879 Robert McIntosh	1916 W.J. McCorquodale
1880 Donald Matheson	1917 James Baker
1881 Robert Matheson	1925 James Morrison
1885 John McKenzie	1933 Norman McLeod
1888 Robert Matheson	1944 D. McCorquodale
1889 James A. Baker	

J. D. Wood was first secretary of the Township School Area, succeeded by his son Ernest Wood.

### INTERESTING FINANCIAL RECORDS

In 1907, the old school was sold to George Smith for the sum of \$151. The brick from the old school is still to be seen in the house now owned and occupied by Gurney Dennis on lot 24, con. 3.

The old seats and desks were sold at 30¢ each and 9 desks at \$1 each.



Money for the new school was raised as follows:

Borrowed from Donald Murray	\$1000.00
Borrowed from Mary ann Murray	2400.00
Funds from special tax	3575.10
Expenses for new school	9636.60
Deficit	3.50

An income from the Clergy Reserve was used for educational purposes in this school section from 1864-1910 at least.

The school trustees paid Thomas Glendinning 25¢ a year for water privileges from 1889-1906.

James Baker received 25¢ a year rent on the old school site from 1864-1874 and then \$2 a year from 1875-1887. Mrs. D. Morrison received \$2 a year from 1888-1907.

