

OAKNER

CONSOLIDATED
SCHOOL

290

1919-1967

OAKNER CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

Oakner Consolidated School opened on January 5, 1920. It was an important event in this district formed by the joining of the Rural School Districts of Scotia and Oakner.

Plans for a new school building evolved through the years 1912-1919, as is documented in Department of Education records, in the History of Scotia and in the school meeting minute books of those years.

The minutes of Oakner Annual Ratepayers Meeting of July 17, 1912, record the item:

"The matter of consolidation was discussed, but owing to the small representation, it was decided to leave the matter over for the present."

This was the earliest reference found about the possible forming of larger districts. The building of a new school was apparently being thought of in the years 1912-1916. At the Annual Meeting held at Oakner on July 17, 1916, a positive step was taken. The Secretary, A. Smith, was authorized by motion:

"to write the Grand Trunk Railway offering \$50.00 per acre for six acres for a school site."

Apparently the transaction took place for at a meeting on March 2, 1917 arrangements were made to request the railway company to survey the school site. (For the work they were later paid the sum of \$16.10). This piece of land was on Sec 8, 13, 23. Also at this March 2, 1917 board meeting, the Secretary was asked "to approach some of the neighbours to see if they could cultivate the grounds". Included in the records are detailed instructions for the cultivation of the ground which could have been formulated only by experienced farmers.

"Land to be plowed light between 15th and 30th of May. To be plowed not less than six inches about the first week in July. To be harrowed twice after each plowing and cultivated and kept black after the second plowing."

Department of Education building plans were studied at the same meeting and the Secretary was asked to write the department "to get other plans more suitable."

A one or two roomed school was being considered at this time.

At the Annual Meeting on July 15, 1917, the Secretary records "Some discussion regarding the building of a new school-- It was decided to call a meeting sometime next winter to decide the matter."

In the years of 1917 and 1918, consolidation was also being discussed in the Scotia district. It is recorded in 'The History of Scotia' by Mrs. A. M. MacKay that

"an agitation was afoot to consolidate school districts".

A later item records

"The Scotia and Mapleshade school houses were sold in 1918 and the districts divided between Crandall and Oakner School Districts."

After receiving petitions from the school districts of Scotia No. 290, Mapleshade No. 832, and Oakner No. 510, the joining of these districts was legalized by the Council of the Municipality of Hamiota on the tenth day of August A.D. 1918 in Bylaw 351. Thus the OAKNER CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT was formed:

BY - LAW NO. 351

A By-law re adding certain lands to Oakner School District No. 510.

Whereas certain petitions have been presented to the Council of the Municipality of Hamiota, asking that certain lands within the School Districts of Scotia and Mapleshade be added to the School District of Oakner, No. 510, thereby forming a Consolidated School District. Be it therefore enacted by the Council of the Municipality of Hamiota as follows:-

That the following lands now in Scotia School District No. 290, be added to Oakner School District No. 510, Sections 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, East $\frac{1}{2}$ 5, East $\frac{1}{2}$ 8, East $\frac{1}{2}$ 17, Tp. 13, Range 24.

That the following lands formerly of Mapleshade School District No. 832, be added to Oakner School District, No. 510. South $\frac{1}{2}$ Sec 21, all Sec 22, 23, South half Sections 25 and 26, Tp. 13, Rge. 24.

That the following lands at present in no School District be also added to the said Oakner District No. 510. Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, all in Tp. 13, Rge. 23.

Done and passed in council duly assembled in the Village of Hamiota, this tenth day of August, A.D. 1918.

Sdg.

.....*Joe Andrew*.....
Sec-Treas.

.....*Robt Van Norman*.....
Chairman.

A meeting of the ratepayers of this new district was held on January 28, 1919, at which the Board of Trustees was elected. These were:

Chairman	- MR. J. STRACHAN	(Scotia)
Secretary-Treasurer	MR. A. SMITH	(Oakner)
	MR. JAMES ANDERSON	(Scotia)
	MR. G. Y. RANKIN	(Oakner)
	MR. WM. WATT	(Oakner)
	MR. ALEX COWAN	(Oakner)

When this Board met for the first time, the Secretary "was instructed to get plans for two, three and four roomed schools."

A larger building was now being considered for the larger school district.

At a special ratepayers meeting called on February 24, 1919, it was agreed that

"the school site Sec 8, 13, 23, purchased from the Grand Trunk Land Development Co. by Oakner Rural School Board, be accepted as the site for the new Consolidated School."

(This was the site cultivated and cared for since 1917).

The ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone took place late in the fall. On the large block of Manitoba limestone was inscribed the year, 1919, the name of the architect, E. A. Tuttle, and the names of the trustees - John Strachan, Chairman
 G. Y. Rankin W. Watt A. Cowan
 A. Smith, Secretary-Treasurer

T H E O P E N I N G

Then came the day! January 5. 1920. The "new" school was opened!! Eightyfour children assembled. From the village they came on foot. From the country they came in horse drawn sleighs. (The heated winter vans were not yet completed.)

The teachers were prepared and waiting when the school bell was rung for that first day.

Dr. Hindle, a meticulous organizer, was supervising principal and enrolled 17 students in grades 7 - 11.

Miss Evelyn Burrows was teacher of grades 3 - 6 and enrolled 29 students.

Miss Edith Andrew registered 38 children in grades 1 and 2. It was the first day of school for 20 of these children.

When the children were seated and the registers marked, they had time to observe the large well lit classrooms, to note the electric lights, the cupboards, and the clock ticking on the wall. Of course they had to pull out the drawers in their new individual desks, and to look about at their new classmates.

School work soon became routine and preparation for singing at the official opening was begun.

The lists of students enrolled in 1920, 1921 and 1922 were obtained from the Department of Education microfilm records.

C L A S S L I S T S - 1920

January - June

Miss E. Andrew

R O O M 1

Grade I

Grade II

Neil Arthur
 Margaret Rankin
 Walter Riddell
 Mae Brown
 Walter Sked
 Norman Ewen
 Harold Dickie
 Nettie Sheardown
 Mary Smith
 Hazel Erickson
 Teena Sheardown
 John Rankin
 Gordon Watt

Edith Knight
 Edward Anderson
 Campbell McMillan
 Walter Gammock
 Willie Smyth
 Cora Ewen
 Allister Arthur
 Ivy Smith
 Ina Smith
 Mary Brown
 Ruth Grove
 John Walker

Georgina Anderson
 Eliza Milne
 Chrissie Young
 Fannie Brandon
 Dougal McLellan
 Leslie Reid
 George Rankin
 Jim McMillan
 Grace Thompson
 Earl Smith
 Alex Gammock
 Douglas Dickie
 Edith Mason

Special Ratepayers Meeting Gatner Bon. Sec. 8. 13. 25
 Held at Gatner Feby 24th 19

Moved by G. Rankin Sec. by A. Smith that
 Mrs Strachan act as chairman. Carried

Moved by Wm Watt Sec by J. Young that A. Smith
 be Secy. Carried

Minutes of last meeting read & adopted a
 motion by G. Rankin Sec by J. Young. Carried

Moved by G. Rankin Sec. by Mrs Strachan that the
 School Site on Sec 8. 13. 25. purchased from Grand
 Trunk Land Development Co. by Gatner Rural School
 Board be accepted as site for the New Consolidated
 School. Carried

Moved by Wm Watt Sec by J. Young that the next
 meeting be held at the call of the Secy & Chairman
 Carried

Moved by G. Rankin Sec. by Wm Watt that meeting
 be adjourned. Carried.

John Strachan, Chairman
 A. Smith Secy Treas

Minutes of the new school board meeting of March 26, 1919 contain an item worthy of being included here:

"Moved by G. Y. Rankin and seconded by A. Cowan that the Secretary be instructed to write the Department of Education to the effect that it is the unanimous wish of the Oakner Consolidated School Board No. 510 as now designated be changed to Oakner Consolidated School District No. 290, thereby retaining the Scotia School District number".

At the same meeting the Secretary was asked "to write a letter to the architect E. A. Tuttle, 705 McArthur Building, Winnipeg, to go forward with plans for a four-room school building along the lines discussed."

Plans were submitted and at the April 17, 1919 meeting, Mr. Tuttle was advised "to go ahead with the plans".

Another important decision was made at this time, It was moved that "a bylaw be passed authorizing the borrowing of \$25,000.00 to be used in the construction of a four-room school building, and that Council be asked to take a vote of the ratepayers."

Arrangements were made at this date to negotiate for some of the lands of the Anworth district. The Department of Education Formation Files, dated October 7, 1919, carry an item signed by Inspector J. Boyd Morrison recommending that certain designated sections of the "present Anworth School District No. 158 be attached to Oakner Consolidated School District". "This to take place January 1, 1920."

Progress was being made. The district was enlarged, the school board was chosen, loan of money arranged, an architect selected and plans were being drawn.

An item in the annual ratepayer's meeting reads "that the trustees be empowered to use their judgment in the matter of plans and contracts."

The duties of the School Board were greatly increased. A staff of three teachers had to be procured and a caretaker (Mr. Beckett) hired. The transportation of the children necessitated the arranging of van routes, the tendering for van drivers, the securing of winter and summer vans, the buying or building of shelter for horses and for the seasonal storage of vehicles. The school grounds had to be prepared, first by cultivation and later by planting of grass and hundreds of trees and shrubs. The supervision of the building and the arranging of finances were heavy responsibilities.

The efforts of these men and all those who gave freely of their time and energy to conduct the business of the school, should be recognized even at this late date.

Eventually building plans were finalized. The architect, E. A. Tuttle, procured the Sigurdson Bros. as builders and the construction was begun.

As the building 'grew' so did the interest of the young and old... more than the school trustees inspected the progress. To the adults, this was a dream becoming reality. To the children who had attended one room school houses, this large brick building with four classrooms, a chemistry lab. a library, an auditorium and boys' playroom, hardwood floors, electric lights and modern facilities, was quite awe inspiring.

ROOM 2

January - June 1920

M. E. Burrows

Grade III

Reid Edna
Johnson Clara
Brandon Norvel
Knudson Mary
Ewen May
Dempsey Thomas
Dempsey John
Brown Ernie
Knudson Bernhard
Milne Murdo
Sked Christopher

Dickie Jean
Gammoch James
Grade IV
Smith Stewart
Riddell Annie
Anderson Joe
Smith Clarence
Grade V
Walker James
Walker Adam
Johnson Ruby

Ewen Grace
Grove Audrey
Anderson Hudson
Grade VI
Sked Chrissie
Rankin Phyllis
Johnson Evelyn
Brown Laura
Anderson Annie
Simpson Jean

ROOM 3

January - June 1920

Dr. G. Hindle

Grade VIII

Angus Loretta
Brown Reginald
Lorimer Hazel
Reid Helen
Smith Ruby

Grade IX
Anderson Hubert
Brandon Vera
Brown Fredrich
Simpson Elsie
Wylie Cecelia

Grade X
Brandon Lorne
Rankin Jean
Brandon Clifford
Rankin Mabel
Riddell William
Grade XI
Gray Alfred

* * *

B E G I N N E R S 1921, 1922

August to December 1921

Miss M. E. Deacon

Mabel Colbeck
Willie McLaughlin

Jimmie Dempsey
Jessie Watt

Mary Smith
Mary Milne

January to June 1922

Miss M. E. Simpson

Alice Colbeck
Marie Sheardown

Agnes McMillan
Beatrice Riddell

Ellwood Angus

August to December 1922

Miss E. M. Jackson

Alfred Strachan
Isabel Turner

Margaret Johnson
Muriel Angus
Pearl McMillan

Hector Arthur
Connie Zacharias

The next ten days were busy ones for the new staff. In addition to organizing classes and teaching, they were involved in planning and preparing for the official school opening to be held on January 16. This event was reported in the Hamiota Echo --

THURSDAY, JAN. 22, 1920

Oakner Consolidated Officially Opened

An event of importance in the educational history of the province of Manitoba, took place on Jan. 16th at Oakner, when the fine new four roomed school building was officially opened. Pupils, ratepayers, trustees and visitors to the number of 250 thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

The building is a great credit to this prosperous district. It is a four roomed building with all class rooms on the ground floor. This permits a large basement providing a fine assembly hall, kitchen, mechanical training room, play rooms etc. Above the main hall are Science room, library and principal's office. The whole building reflects great credit on the architect Mr. E. B. Tuttle, Winnipeg.

From twelve to two a fowl dinner was served by the ladies. The school afforded excellent facilities for doing this, and the excellence of the dinner was only faintly described by the chairman when

he said it was the best dinner he had had in many Christmas'. All visitors agreed that it was a dinner that will not be surpassed soon.

Mr. J. H. McCounell, M.L.A., acted as chairman in his own happy way. Many visitors brought congratulations to children, trustees and ratepayers on the opening of the school. These included Trustees Elliott and Douglas of the Miniota School Board, and Mayor Kerr, J. Murray and J. B. Morrison, of Hamiota. The programme opened with a chorus, "O Canada," by the pupils, and these took creditable part in the programme under the direction of Principal Hinde and staff. Local talent also contributed excellent selections to the program.

There were brief speeches by Rev. R. E. Spence and others, offering congratulations and good wishes. Rev. Geo. Lockhart, in a thoughtful address, advocated the importance of the real in education to-day, and warned against the fictitious in reading. Dr. W. A. McIntyre, Winnipeg, representing the Department, gave a fine address on educational agencies, parentage,

the home, the school, occupations, and the community. Mr. Ira Stratton, Winnipeg, also representing the Department, spoke on his work, and the work of his army of teachers among children in the foreign speaking settlements. All the addresses were thoroughly enjoyed by the large audience.

The Consolidated School District of Oakner includes the lands of the historic districts of Scotia and old Eden, with additional lands from the east and south. These districts have had a long and creditable record, and the Scotia District No. 290 is retained in the new district, which begins with fine promise of a career of great usefulness. The trustees of the new district are: John Strachan, Chairman; G. Y. Rankin, Jas. Anderson, W. Watt, J. R. Rankin, A. Smith, Secretary. It may be truly said that the trustees and the people of the community have made a real contribution to the future of the nation, in providing so fine a school.

Oakner & Scotia Y.P.S.

will present the 3-Act Play :

"SONNY JANE"

— IN —

OAKNER SCHOOL

— ON —

Friday, MAY 1st, 1931

at 8.15 p.m.

ADULTS 35c

CHILDREN 20c

(By Special Arrangements with Eldridge Entertainment House.)

Newly Organized Y.P.S., Elects Officers

Oakner, Man., Dec. 7.—The newly organized Y.P.S. of Oakner, met Wednesday evening with approximately fifty in attendance.

Play Enjoyed.

Oakner, Man., May 4.—The Oakner Scotia Young Peoples' society staged a play entitled "Sonny Jane," Friday evening, in the school auditorium, under the direction of Rev. N. B. McLenaghan. The cast included, the Misses Phyllis Rankin, Laura Brown, Annie Anderson, Rene Smith, Kay Emerson and May Brown, the Messrs. William Ross, L. White, E. Smith, J. Rankin and Fred Ingram.

Following the play the members of the cast and their friends attended a birthday party in honor of Miss May Brown, one of the players, Dr. and Mrs. Hudson, received congratulations on their 17th wedding anniversary. Speakers of the evening were Miss Brown, G. Y. Rankin, Dr. Hudson, Lewis Whyte and Rev. McLenaghan.

The Scotia Oakner Young Peoples Society practised and staged three act plays in the auditorium. Some of these events were reported in the press.

The school provided a meeting place, where people gathered together for work or recreation and contributed to the feeling of 'community'.

The official opening was the first of many activities to take place in the large auditorium of the school.

In it and in the boys' basement, the children assembled in inclement weather. Indoor baseball and other games were played. Dancing to the piano music provided by students began and remained popular for many years to come. Folk dancing classes, P.T., festival music practise and, of course, preparation for concerts, all took place in this room.

The auditorium provided space for many community events. The annual Christmas Tree concert was presented here to a packed house of parents and children. Community dances and "social evenings" were organized and were events enjoyed by young and old. The larger room and the kitchen facilities were used for the Church "fowl suppers" and for the C.G.I.T. "Mother and Daughter" banquets and for "showers" and wedding receptions.

OAKNER 1927

In the school hall, on Friday, June 24th, the Oakner C.G.I.T. Group entertained at a "Mother and Daughter" banquet. The hall was beautifully decorated in the C.G.I.T. colors and the tables arranged to form a large square, in the centre of which was a small table of flowers, also decorated in colors.

Promptly at 6.30 the girls escorted their mothers from the library, where they had been received, to the hall. After the C.G.I.T. grace had been sung and all had done justice to the banquet prepared by the girls, Toastmistress Helen Reid gave a short "Address of Welcome" and proposed the toast to "The King." This was responded to by the singing of "The National Anthem." May Brown recited a very appropriate poem and proposed the toast to "Our Country," which was responded to by the singing of "O, Canada," and the response was given by Mrs. R. E. Brown. The toast to "Our Daughters" was proposed by Mrs. Reid and responded to by Phyllis Rankin. In the absence of Georgina Anderson and Grace Ewen, the toastmistress proposed the toasts, to "The Sunday School," which was responded to by Mrs. Jos. Anderson, and to "The C.G.I.T.," to which Miss Hedley made the response. Solos suitable to the occasion were sung by Misses Edna Reid and Annie Riddell. Recitations were given by Jessie Watt and Margaret Rankin.

Everybody enjoyed a sing song and the C.G.I.T. yells, led by Miss Hedley. A short address of appreciation to Miss Hedley, as organizer and leader of the local group, was read by Eliza Milne, and Edith Knight, representing the group, presented her with a leather hand bag.

The enjoyable program was brought to a close by the singing of "Taps" and a short prayer by Mrs. G. Y. Rankin.

C.G.I.T.

1928

Beautifully decorated with flowers and streamers in the C.G.I.T. colors, Oakner school presented a colorful scene when the C.G.I.T. Blue Chasers entertained at a banquet recently. Guests for the evening included mothers, members of the first aid class, Dr. and Mrs. Hudson, Rev. and Mrs. Wallace and Rev. and Mrs. Lund. Miss Phyllis acted as toast mistress. Mrs. Hathaway, on behalf of the "First Aid Class", read an address to Dr. Hudson and presented him with a beautiful pen. Mrs Stevens (nee Miss Helen Reid) was also presented with an address and a silver tray. "Follow the Gleam" and C.G.I.T. yells brought the evening to a fine climax.

1922

OAKNER

Oakner, Man., Feb. 5.—A most successful masquerade ball was held in the Oakner school on Friday, the large assembly hall being filled to overflowing. The costumes, which were practically all home made, were very cleverly designed. The prize winners were as follows: Ladies' home made, fancy, 1. Japanese lady, Miss Mabel Rankin; 2. Folly, Mrs. Smith; ladies' comic, Cushion, Miss Annie Anderson; gents' home made, fancy, gentleman of the 18th century, Alex. Park; gents' comic, Dutchman, Lorne Brandon; free-for-all, the Heavenly Twins, Lewis Whyte and Harold Brown.

1929

OAKNER

The Oakner C.G.I.T. groups (junior and senior) held a "Mother and Daughter" banquet in Oakner basement on Friday evening, May 31st. There were seventy-two present. The tables were marvelously displayed with good things to eat. The guests of honor were Rev. and Mrs. Lund, Rev. and Mrs. Wallace, and Mr. and Mrs. Rife. Dr and Mrs. Hudson were unable to attend. After the banquet, Toast Mistress Eliza Milne proposed the toast to "Our King", which was responded to by the singing of "God Save the King"; Rev. Wallace proposed the toast to "Our Country", and was responded to by "O Canada"; May Brown then proposed the toast to "Our Mothers", and Mrs. Harry Knight responded to it. Mrs. Lund proposed the toast to the "C.G.I.T." and Jessie Watt responded. The toast to "Our Visitors" was proposed by Miss Edna Reid, and responded to by Mrs. Wallace. Olive Strachan proposed the toast to the "Sunday School", and Rev. Lund responded. After this a singsong of the popular C.G.I.T. songs were sung. May Brown acted as pianist.

S P O R T S A N D O T H E R A C T I V I T I E S

Changes in schools also brought change in games and sports. The larger enrolment made team games possible. Though all ages of girls and boys played "football" together the first winter, summer brought about segregated team games.

Playground equipment was improved. A number of swings and 'see-saws' were installed for the small children, (but some older ones enjoyed "pumping" those swings as high as possible). Baseball diamonds were laid out and basket ball poles erected.

The first boys' baseball team was formed. The first competitive game took place with the Crandall school team as adversaries. Practice and preparation for this event produced excitement in players and in the young volunteers who providing drinking water, towels, and lemons for the athletes. Who won? That has not been recorded. That the team continued to thrive is indicated by the fact that they eventually owned real professional type grey striped uniforms.

Baseball, and later softball and volleyball were popular team games throughout the life of the school.

Basket ball developed as one of the main girls' team sports. Their first uniforms were the full navy blue bloomers approved for "dies" of the day, and middies. Keen interest in basket ball was "sparked" by the donation of the "Cup" by Mrs. Chambers of Hamiota.

Many competitive games were "fought" through the years to "gain" or "retain" the possession of that trophy. The interest in basket ball was revived from time to time and the Cup was won and held for the year by Oakner teams a number of times.

In later years, the Cup was "redonated" at the instigation of the Oakriver School Council, to Softball and the Victoria Day Softball completion became popular among schools.

Hockey teams became possible when the Oakner rink was built. Many "good clean games" which produced only minor breaks and bruises were played with surrounding school teams. The Oakner school sponsored Hockey Tournaments popular among the schools for a number of years.

Another major event which involved every child in the school was the annual Kenton Field Day. For many years it was a high-light in the school term. "Marching" in formation became almost part of the "curriculum" as preparations for the great day were made. Softball, basket ball, volleyball, relay teams and individuals worked out at noon and in 'physed' periods. Costumes and banner in the school colours of blue and white were planned and made. To carry the banner in the "parade" was a high honour. Indeed to see the hundreds of school children marching into the 'grounds' to the skirl of the bagpipes was a thrilling sight.

To win highest marks for the school marching was a goal coveted as greatly as that of winning the most points on the sports field. The "afterglow" of either of these achievements could almost overshadow the "glow" of the sunburn many children suffered; if the days were sunny and windy.

T H E M U S I C A L F E S T I V A L

Another yearly event in which the school took part was the Musical Festival held in Hamiota each spring. Class room choirs and soloists were trained in the school by music and class teachers, sometimes assisted by the musicians in the community. Bea Riddell, Fay McMillan and Mrs. Julien were some of those who supported the musical activities.

T H E T E A C H E R S 1920 - 1924

	<u>Room 1</u>	<u>Room 2</u>	<u>Room 3</u>
Jan. to June 1920	Miss E. Andrew	Miss E. Burrow	Dr. G. Hindle
Aug. to Dec. 1920	Miss M. E. Deacon	Miss L.E.Simpson	Miss L.B.Maxwell
Jan. to June 1921	Miss M.E. Simpson	Miss L.E.Simpson	Mr. G. Dyson
Aug. to Dec. 1921	Miss M.E. Simpson	Miss L.E.Simpson	Mr. G. Dyson Room 4 - Miss Duval
Jan. to June 1922	Miss M.E.Simpson	Miss L.E.Simpson Miss G. Whitney	Mr. G. Dyson
Aug. to Dec. 1922- June 23	Miss E.M. Jackson	Miss E. Whitney	Mr. W. Rideout
Aug. 1923 - June 1924	Annie Hill	E. White	Willard Rife
Aug. 1924 - June 1925	?	?	Willard Rife

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The Oakner Teachers were involved in many School related activities. They also contributed to many facets of the community life as leaders of the C.G.I.T. groups, as teachers in Sunday School, as members of choirs and of the Young Peoples Society. Though these were not school "duties" their involment in them contributed a great deal to the district.

We pay tribute to all teachers who served in the community.

In the forty years since the Oakner School opened, many changes have taken place in the way of life. Improved roads and cars made it possible to move farther afield. Mechanized implements made larger farms possible, and the number of families on the farm decreased. Trucks took over much of the railway business. The station was demolished. Populations shifted. Radio and TV became widely used. No longer were rural people entirely dependent on the local store for supplies or the community for recreation.

Changes too came to the school. Student population rose and fell, the size of classes changed.

School transportation altered. Cars were used for summer vans. Then as the roads and cars improved, children were carried all year in cars. Vans became obsolete. Team games were played long distances from home. Tournaments were organized - the players being driven in cars.

In January 1959 steps were taken to dispose of vans, van sheds, and the small stable.

In September 1959 a new service in transportation was initiated. Four students, Marlene English, Ken Dickie, Wilma Flemming and Bob Hunter, entering Grade XII were driven to Hamiota High School by T. Sedgwich who was engaged by the Oakner District.

SCHOOL DIVISIONS FORMED - 1959

A much greater change was about to occur. The Department of Education, in an attempt to provide improved education to the young people in the rural areas, was establishing large School Divisions. Oakner Consolidated School District would be joined with other districts to form the Birdtail River Division No. 38. Implementation of the large division policy would be introduced gradually.

Information in regard to this change was sought from the Department of Education and relayed to the parents. A number of meetings to discuss the situation were held in the years 1959-60.

In January 1960 a special meeting of the electors was called in Oakner. After careful consideration of the situation, two motions were presented and passed.

1. "That the High School at Oakner be closed"
2. "That the board request the Birdtail River Division No. 38 to close Oakner High School, and make arrangements to have the students accepted elsewhere, preferrably at Hamiota".

This was done and arrangements were made for transportation to the Hamiota High School in September 1960.

The grade IX to XI students were brought to Oakner School in the vans carrying the primary and elementary children. Three van drivers were hired to drive them to and from Hamiota each day.

When these plans were being made, the following list of students was submitted to the board.

T H E C L A S S R O O M S

Only three rooms in the school were used for classes when the school opened. The fourth was used as living quarters for the principal, Dr. Hindle and his wife, in January 1920, and by the principal who came in August 1920 - Miss Maxwell and her mother.

The fourth was used for the first time as a classroom in August 1921 when Miss Duval was hired to teach grades 6, 7 & 8, and French in the high school.

By this time the "teacherage" had been bought and Mr. & Mrs. Dyson lived there and Miss Duval boarded with them.

As enrolment increased or decreased, this room four was used intermittently. When not in classroom use, it became an activity room, equipped with games and ping pong tables.

S T U D E N T S 1920 - 1967

Where have they lived?

Many have remained in and near the home district - but many have gone farther afield. They are scattered from the east coast to the west coast - into the north and some deep into southern U.S.A.

What work have they done?

Many have made farming their life work and this includes the woman of the team. Others have worked in farm related business. One developed prize gladiolas. One was a dentist, one the principal of a business college, one the president of a university, one the owner and supervisor of nursing homes, one the supervisor of a hospital. Many have been nurses, stenographers, secretaries, teachers, hospital workers, often combining one of these with raising a family. Some taught music, one was a teacher and principal for a life time. One became a professional hockey player, others became policemen, scientists, mechanical engineers, members of R.C.M.P. Some have worked in communications, engineering, home economics, dairying, mining, forestry and the armed forces. Most have combined the means of "making a living" with the making of a "life" contributing greatly to the community in which they live. Some have died, and we think of them now. Four who gave their lives in the war of 1939 were

Alexander Clark	F/O Frank P. Harrison
S/L A. Wayne Colbeck	W/O J. Malcolm McCallum

Below is an excerpt from a letter to Mrs. Doern (Jean Collie) from the Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Director of Surveys, A.C. Roberts. This was in answer to a request by Mrs. Doern for information on the naming of a geographical feature after the four veterans who had once attended Oakner School.

"I am pleased to confirm that a lake was named after S/L Arthur Wayne Colbeck, Regimental No. 014690, 1962. The lake is located in Northern Manitoba at Latitude 59° 09' and Longitude 101° 19'. It is shown on map 64^N/3, Colbeck Lake."

WE TOO REMEMBER THEM.

Keith Fraser
 M. English
 Gwen Bomford
 Jim Bomford
 Lorraine Bates
 Ken Julyan
 Lyle Julyan

L. Lawson
 Clinton Hunter
 Fraser Hunter
 Barry Fraser
 Dianne Fraser
 Linda Rankin
 Pearl Routledge

Leanne Godlein
 Linda Colbeck
 Jim Ridley
 Donnie Smith
 Bryan Smith
 Betty Lou White
 Bob Allan

I wonder - did the students look forward with anticipation equal to that of those, who had forty years before, moved from the rural schools to the Oakner Consolidated School?

The first step in the implementation of the Department of Education's larger Division policy was taken in the Oakner District in 1960.

T H E L A S T Y E A R S

Two rooms of the Oakner school continued to operate for another six years. In Room 1 Mrs. G. Smuttell taught grades I - IV from 1959 - 1965. Mrs. Routledge returned to Oakner School to teach grades I - IV from 1965 - 1967. Room 2 with grades V - VIII was taught by Mrs. L. Glenn 1959 - 1961. Miss L. Penny, Mr. C. A. Kutzan, Mr. W. W. Sangster each taught one year. Mrs. Joan Foxton taught the three years from 1964 - 1967.

T H E L A S T C L A S S E S
1966 - 1967

TEACHERS --- Mrs. M. Routledge

Mrs. J. Foxton

Gr I

Ross Bates
 Dianne Bomford
 Mark Klypenstyn
 Elaine Routledge
 Donna Unsworth

Gr V

Brian Anderson
 Ross Argue
 Sandra Arthur
 Gordon Bates
 Brian Hunter
 Ron Knight
 Colin Lawson

Gr II

Murray Cumming
 Shauna McKinnon

Gr VI

Kelvin Anderson
 Carolyn Collie
 Ruddy Goertzen

Gr III

Laureen Anderson
 Donna Arthur
 Vernon Brown
 Graham Collie
 Vicki Cumming
 Billy Kleppenstyn
 Dianne Smythe
 Brent Strachan

Gr VII

Donna Argue
 Ronda Lawson
 Debbie Anderson

Gr VIII

Billy Cumming
 Allan Kozak
 Donna White

In 1967 the Larger Division Policy of the Department of Education became fully implemented.

(The legalized date of dissolution of Oakner Consolidated School District is January 1, 1968 according to the Dept. of Education files.)

In June 1967, the bell of the Oakner Consolidated School rang for the last time.

IT WAS THE END OF AN ERA !!!

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SCOURCES OF INFORMATION

Manitoba Archive Building Files
Mary Perfect-Thesis

Department of Education - Administration Office

1. Formation Files
2. Microfilm Library
3. Annual Department of Education Reports 1919-1920

Manitoba Teachers" Society
Inspectors Reports 1960 - 1967

Minute Books - Oakner 1912-19, 1957-59


History of Scotia - Mrs. M. A. MacKay

Individual contributors of information

Mr. M. Anderson, Oakner
Mrs. Beaumont (Nellie Beckett)
Mrs. H. D. Brown (L. E. Simpson)
Mrs. Cecelia Dickie (Wylie)
Mrs. Jean Doern (Collie)
Mrs. Ruby Godlein (Smith)
Mr. Vince Leah (Winnipeg Tribune)
Mrs. Bernice Lowe (Strachan)
Mr. J. L. Rankin
Mr. Don McLennan

And many others!

Thank you


E. P. RANKIN.

REMEMBER THE "SOCIAL EVENINGS" for the whole family? Programmes of short plays, musical numbers and readings were prepared by small groups. Lunch, provided by "Mother", was served. Card games and dancing followed. "Father" paid 25¢ (per family). Local musicians donated the music. Andy Riddell, Bob Collie, Will Ross and others "called" the dances.

When the room was cleared after lunch, the small children had their fun, running or dancing. The wee ones were put to sleep in the high backed benches - and the Mothers had a 'night out' dancing the waltzes, polkas, and square dances.

The "social evenings" as they were called, provided cheap entertainment, and developed the talents of the district.

B.L. & P.R.

* * * *

THE SCHOOL TODAY -- It is with sadness I now view the once beautiful Oakner School, with its vacant eyes. In memory it stands in all its glory serving the community and its people well.

Today, in solemn solitude, it stands close by the historic 1909 Oakner Church - two silent sentinels keeping vigil over the quiet hamlet.

And the trains go by -- their mournful wail lamenting the change and the years that are gone.

Cecelia Dickie (Wylie)

* * * *

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Cheering for your baseball team?

Playing that gentle game of basketball?

Square dancing to the music of the violin?

The three act plays - the painting of scenery?

The box socials? Who would buy your box?

The Festival Concerts?

Fire drill?

The first masquerade?

Why not complete your list of "I REMEMBERS" here or in your diary.

O U T O F T H E P A S T

WE REMEMBER "THE STORM" in March 1920 when the students had to stay in the school all night. Van drivers acted as the life line between the school and the "town". They came in with faces red and rimmed in frost, bringing bedding and food from the villagers and store. The "Hindles" set up tables and fed the hungry children.

When the storm became less severe Mr. Brandon, Mr. Simpson and others came to take the smaller children to their homes. They formed a human chain by putting their arms around each other waists and around their guides to keep from getting separated and lost.

The older students stayed in the school. The girls slept in Mrs. Hindles "apartment" in the north east classroom. The boys slept on the floor and benches in the basement under Dr. Hindles supervision.

In the morning the children were given breakfast. A large pot of porridge was sent in by Mrs. Brandon. Mr. McLellan brought large pails of fresh milk.

The day after the storm was sunny and calm. The vans arrived to take the weary children home. Parents met the vans, breaking trail for them through the huge drifts. So ended a night of anxiety for the parents and a rather pleasant, exciting, unusual experience for the students to be remembered years after.

Ruby (Smith) Godlein
1920 Cecelia (Wylie) Dickie
 Phyllis Rankin

* * *

I REMEMBER THE CHEMISTRY LAB reached by a narrow flight of stairs. Unusual noises descended from that small room. "Atrocious smells" filtered through the ventilator shafts causing one small boy - holding his nose - to exclaim "What a terrible disodour"!

But so scientists are made! 1920 - 1925

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I REMEMBER when the girls danced in the auditorium at recess and noon hour. The pianists were Bea Riddell, whose name we cherish, Helen Moreside, Bernice Anderson and Mae Brown - who lived to play

(Hunt bees)
"Pink elephants on the ceiling,
Pink elephants on the floor"

Kay (Collie) Brooks 1924 - 1935

* * *

WE REMEMBER the "slide" built on the school grounds. It was a busy place on winter days. One clear cold night a group of young people had a "snow slide" party. It was followed by a substantial lunch of home baked beans (brought in a two gallon crock wrapped in blankets) brown bread and coffee.

R.G. & P.R.

I REMEMBER THE FIRST DANCES ... Parents, young people and children all came. Some of the older folk had not danced in years. The young people were eager to learn and were soon taught. People from surrounding towns attended and were made welcome.

The music was supplied by local musicians. John Riddell played the violin, Maggie and Euphemia chorded on the piano. Lorne McCallum played the violin, Violet Lief the guitar - Clarence McConnell played the piano. Others contributed from time to time.

Both old and new steps were danced. Mr. Jack McCallum, a capable floor manager, called out for the start, the Circasséan Circle. The floor would soon be filled. This opening dance was followed by waltzes, one, two, three and four step dances, polkas, the waltz quadrille and square dances. Mr. McCallum was an expert in "calling" for these. Everyone had a good time in the friendly atmosphere, where liquor was not allowed and drugs yet unknown.

These dances of nearly sixty years ago remain cherished memories of fun and friendship.

Cecelia "Wylie" Dickie.

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I REMEMBER THE LIBRARY with its glass wall over the stairways. It was small but it held BOOKS!

H(R)M.

* * * *

I REMEMBER when a class was 'permitted' to use the 'hallowed' room for reading aloud "the Merchant of Venice". The play was later 'produced' in the senior room with Mrs. Maxwell the principal's mother in the 'audience'. Her words of appreciation (greatly exaggerated, as we only read the parts) are still remembered. Forecasting great things for the "actors" she said, with feeling and gestures, "I can see the sign!"

"Coming, for one week only!

The great Shakespearian players"!

Fun! but when I saw my first real production of the play, I followed the lines with ease.

E.P.R. 1921

* * * *

I REMEMBER the annual Christmas Concert and tree and Will Ross' Santa Claus. The children looked forward to his coming, and gifts. They were ecstatic (or frightened) if called to the platform to talk and receive a gift, but the adults "anticipated" the poem he narrated each year - wondering who would be the 'victim' of his jokes or gifts.