

S.S. No. 7

Facey's School

Lot 31, Concession 17, East Zorra Township
northeast corner of the Maplewood Sideroad and the 17th Line



We are rare birds. If we were birds, we'd be on an endangered species list, considered at risk of extinction. We are rare birds because we represent those generations that received their primary education in a one-room schoolhouse.

One-room schools were the backbone of rural Canada from the early 1800s to the 1960s and beyond. Here we learned reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. Also music, art, science, social studies, health and literature. Early on we learned hand signals, too: Number One and Number Two.

The one-room school system worked to educate us not only formally but instructed us in the lessons of community, of what people can accomplish when they work closely together not only to educate their children but to live as neighbours and friends that have a high regard for each other.

**** extract from an essay written by John Bender, a former Facey's School student, written for the school reunion in 2003*

The original schoolhouse, built in 1857, was a small brick building situated on land owned by Thomas Facey. It quickly became known throughout the community as Facey's School. Alex Thynne, the first teacher, received a salary of \$18 a month.

In 1875 the original building was closed and a new larger schoolhouse was erected. The name remained. By the time the official S.S. No. 7 designation was accorded to this building, the Facey's School name was ingrained in the community and wasn't about to change.

Over the years many improvements were made to the school and grounds. Big changes occurred in 1915 when a cellar was dug out and a furnace, new floor, new seats, new blackboard and a cloakroom were installed. The year 1937 saw the introduction of hydro in the school. Outhouses, perhaps more politely called outdoor privies, disappeared in 1938 when indoor toilets were installed. New wells, new furnaces, new seats, new fences and a healthy list of other improvements were made as the need arose. The biggest change came in 1954. An enrolment of 60 students with only 59 available seats resulted in a new addition to the old building.

Times were changing and the days of all of the one-room schoolhouses were numbered. In the S.S. No. 7 area students were increasingly being transferred to larger schools in both Tavistock and Hickson. The end of the 1965-66 school year saw the end of Facey's School. The building took on a new purpose serving the congregation of Maple Grove Mennonite Church from 1975 to 2002. It is presently a private home.

To generations of pupils and people living in the area, Facey's School was a major presence in their lives and their community.

Pupils from Facey's went on to become teachers and professors, nurses and doctors, owners of farms and businesses and a long list of other careers and professions. One became a Member of Parliament in Ottawa and two served as missionaries overseas. No matter where life took them, everyone remembered the lessons they learned at Facey's School. They certainly remembered their teachers.

These days it's hard to imagine one teacher capably teaching all 8 grades with students ranging from 6 years to 16. In some cases the teacher was just a few years older than his / her Grade 8 students. It wasn't just academic learning. There were Christmas concerts to organize complete with making costumes and ensuring everyone knew their part because the whole community would be in attendance on the big night. The annual Fall Fair meant preparation of exhibits and practicing marching for the big parade. Field Day was a much-anticipated day as was the Music Festival, local picnic days, trips away and so many more activities and events.

While the teachers were absolutely center stage there was a broad base of help and support. Facey's, like the other one-room schools, was a community undertaking. The School Board / Trustees (all local people) managed the physical premises with regular inspections to ensure everything was in proper working order and, if not, to arrange for the necessary repairs or upgrades. They also hired the teachers and any supplementary assistance like the travelling music teacher who came for a few hours one day a week. And, of course, there were the parents. Everyone of a certain age remembers that if you got into trouble at school it was nothing compared to the trouble you were in at home. Working together worked.

Memories of schooldays at Facey's were topmost on the agenda at the school reunion held in 2003. More than 250 former students and teachers came from near and far to reminisce about their days of reading and 'riting and 'rithmetic. Gordon Matthies, the oldest former teacher present, talked about his salary of \$450 a year in 1934; bicycling to and from his home in Tavistock in spring and fall and boarding with a local family in the winter; ink wells; and the school garden. Anna Bender Steinman recalled starting her teaching career at Facey's. That was also true for Jim Hostetler who said he "always felt at home here". The highlight was Mrs. Ruth (Wilfred) Rosenberg, a beloved teacher for many in attendance, ringing the school bell and leading the group in opening exercises just as she did all those years ago ... allegiance to the flag, singing "God Save The Queen" and a Bible reading. "Be at your best behaviour" she

told the group of adults just as she had told them decades before as children. Truly words to live by.

The Tavistock & District Historical Society has a collection of material from all the schools in the area.

Specific to S.S. No. 7, Facey's School, we have articles, stories and photos as detailed in the list following. Some of the material was prepared by the Princess Elizabeth Women's Institute; some by our Historical Society; and some donated by former students. We've included a few photos here. If you would like to see any or all of the material please call one of the telephone numbers in Contacts in this website to make an appointment to visit the museum / archives. The Historical Society would be very appreciative of any material you may wish to donate related to our local schools and any information you can offer to help date or name records that are incomplete..

- 1) listing of school teachers starting in 1863
- 2) photo dated 1900 with children from the family of Henry and Annie (Mansz) Nicklas identified
- 3) photo circa 1910 with some students named
- 4) photo circa 1916 with some students named
- 5) photo early 1920s with names
- 6) photo mid 1920s with names
- 7) photo 1924 or 1925 with names
- 8) Gazette listing of students, grades and some marks ... 1928, 1930, 1937
- 9) photo 1932 with names
- 10) photo 1933 with most names
- 11) photo 1934 no names
- 12) photo mid 1930s with names
- 13) photo 1941 with names
- 14) photo 1949 with names
- 15) photo 1961 boys hockey team with names
- 16) individual school photos of some students - 1954, 1958, 1960
- 17) Christmas concert photo - Wilfred Rosenberg and Milt Sippel as Santa
- 18) picture taken in 1966 of the school front
- 19) Gazette story "Continuing Education" about Gordon Matthies' teaching career plus 2 other stories about Mr. Matthies
- 20) school reunion poster - 2003
- 21) Gazette story where John Bender shares his memories of SS # 7
- 22) several delightful newspaper stories about the 2003 reunion
- 23) story "My First Teaching Experience" - by Agnes Stock who taught at Facey's in 1924 - 27
- 24) story "A Mother of Vision" - by Agnes Stock about the Wagester family who boarded the teacher
- 25) S.S. Facey's Public School 1962-63 yearbook ... Facey Bombers



On a related note, the Historical Society has a CD called "School Days" ... a live interview with 3 teachers who taught in one-room schools. Those teachers are Mrs. Ruth (Wilfred) Rosenberg, Mrs. Kay (Frank) Bickle and Mrs. Mary Alice (Don) Roth.

S.S. No. 7 - Early 1920s

- Back Row: Frederick Stock, Alma Lingelbach (Knight)
- 6th Row: Arthur Roth, Stan Wagester, Howard Haist
- 5th Row: Druscilla Bender (Zehr, Iutzi, Roth), Idella Lingelbach (Bolwell), Selma Jantzi (Litwiller), Hilda Junker (Vance)
- 4th Row: Lorne Junker, Danny Zehr, Lloyd Bender, Helene Stock (Watson), Lorne Bender, Oliver Wettlaufer (Neeb)
- 3rd Row: Ada Weil (Reibling, Stanley Helmuth, Gordon Junker, ?
- 2nd Row: Milfrid Bender, Rosetta Helmuth (Bast), Idella Schwartzentruber, Harry Weil, Clayton Bender
- Front Row: Arnold Weicker, Willis Lingelbach, Elgin Bender



S.S. No. 7 - mid 1930s

Back Row: Violet Kropf, Eudora Ruby, Ina Bender, Helen Mogk, Magdalena Helmuth, Elizabeth Tiemans, Idula Brodrecht, Ruby Iutzi, Violetta Roth, Lester Cressman, Teacher

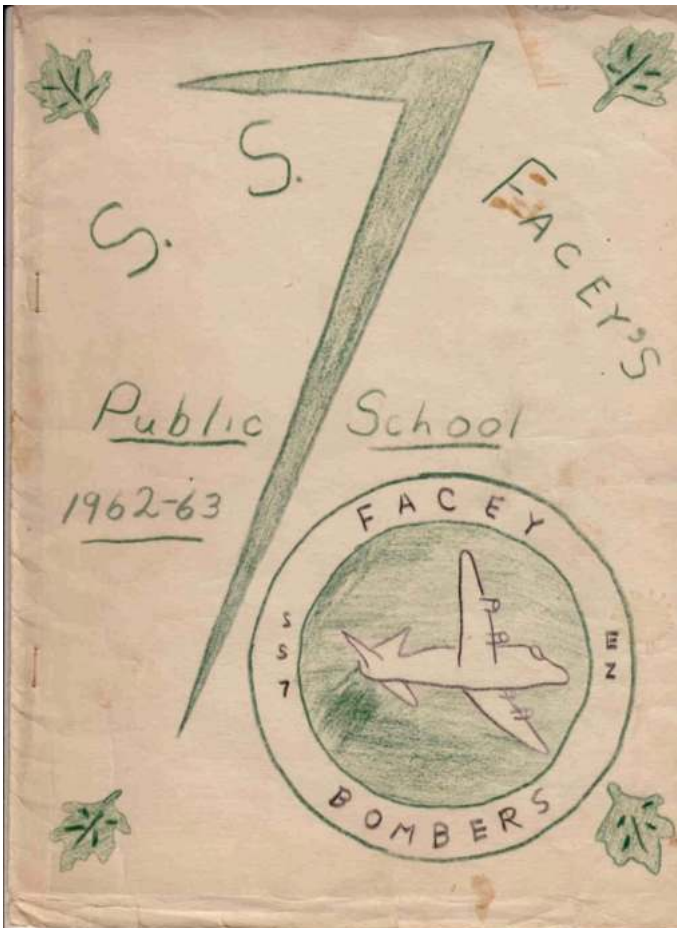
2nd Row: Ruth Nicklas, Velma Iutzi, Minerva Lebold, Hilda Bender, Florence Roth, Helena Bender, Curtis Iutzi, Alfred Schumm, Walter Brodrecht, Donald Brodrecht, Wilfred Roth, Carl Nicklas, Irvin Cressman, Lester Weil, Lorne Kropf

1st Row: Jean Ruby, Erma Zehr, Fannie Mae Schumm, Ruth Zehr, Erma Kropf, Laurene Zehr, Charlotte Brodrecht, Audrey Ruby, Ruby Schumm, Daniel Schumm, Lorne Roth

Sitting: Esther Roth, Vera Cressman, Laurene Dietrich, Doris Iutzi



Christmas Concert with Milt Sippel as Santa Claus and Wilfred "Pop" Rosenberg



School Yearbook 1962-63