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## Dunrobin School No. 3110 *by Mary Bittner*

Dunrobin School District was formed into a School District on Aug. 22, 1913, under the name of Salisbury S.D. No. 3110. A month later the name was changed to the Dunrobin School District No. 3110.

Petition for formation of a school district was declared on Feb. 11, at Sheho, Sask. and was signed by: Fedor Mykycy, Samuel B. Auld, and Pierre Van Roy. Location of the school is the S.E. corner of the S.W. 18-31-9 W2.

On December 13, 1913 the newly elected Board of Trustees of Dunrobin School were given authorization to borrow the sum of fifteen hundred (\$1,500.) dollars by means of debentures, upon the security of the said district, for the purpose of purchasing a school site, and erecting a school building.

The first three trustees were: D. McLennan, James McFarlane, Joseph Bisschop. James McFarlane was Secretary Treasurer for many years.



*Dunrobin School, 1929. Teacher centre back row; Louise Evans.*

The school was opened sometime in 1914. There is no record of the actual date. The first teacher was James Kerr, who did not stay long, as he enlisted and went overseas, when the First World War broke out. on the best information available the names of teachers are:

James Kerr -1914  
 Jane M. Ross  
 Eugenia De Long -1919  
 Janet Shearer  
 Miss Pachal  
 Berry Tibbet  
 Christina Campbell  
 Richard Handford  
 Helena Maulton  
 Laura Louise Evans  
 Jeanne Naaykens  
 Elsie Bergman  
 Matt Kereluik  
 Thelma Harvey

Ve ronza Morari  
 Paulette Pasloski  
 Clinton Dalshaug  
 Steve N ovakowski  
 Leonard Butula  
 M.M. Tarnoweski  
 George Hubilit  
 George Gilmisk  
 George Chaboylo  
 Rose Paley  
 Ed Skoronski  
 Garry Wilson  
 Martin P. Osika, 1961-1962

At this time rural school enrollment had dropped drastically in Saskatchewan. Larger school units had been formed, with Dunrobin S.D. No. 3110 belonging to the Canora School Unit. Rural schools were gradually closed, and students were bussed to the nearest urban centre. Dunrobin went to Sheho, with one or two students later going to Invermay. Thus 48 years, and the era of the Dunrobin School District came to an end. At the time of writing (1985) the school building remains on its original site, is owned by Rene Bisschop, son of the original owner, and is used for storing grain.

Students on record in 1919-1920:

Caroline Naaykens  
 Jeanne Naaykens  
 Lizzie Naaykens  
 Doris Elsom  
 Norbert Bisschop  
 William McFarlane  
 William McLennan  
 Marian Logan  
 Lorne Cameron  
 Allan Cameron  
 James Logan  
 Annie Tobish  
 Stephen Honeywitch  
 Katrina Paley  
 Lena Paley  
 Charles Paley

Ettie Holley  
 Harry Mikaluk  
 Marie Paley  
 Katie Myketsy  
 Charles Myketsy  
 William Can  
 Dorothy Olekwick  
 Mary Oshaneck  
 Annie Myketsy  
 Louise Violetta Holley  
 Lizzie Olekwick  
 Christina McLennan  
 Marion Auld  
 Elsie Auld  
 Charles Auld

This list is not complete, due to a lack of records. Last students in 1962:

Terrance Kolodzaejski, Eugene Hrehor, Ronald Kolodzaejski, Jane Ann Paley, Lorne William Hrehor, Joyce Kamentz, James Laird, Richard John Paley.

As the records show, Dunrobin was a pioneer school, which served the community for 48 years. The first ratepayers were all homesteaders. So many records are missing that it has been impossible to make a total and complete coverage of those first years. In my search for information I found twenty one years of school registers missing.

As I go back in memory, I know that Dunrobin School, like hundreds of other pioneer schools, was no doubt the single most important influence on the lives of the students that passed through its doors.

Because of the isolation of those years, with no radio, T.V. or even telephone, to a child of that era, the school was not only a place to learn the three R's, but was also a centre of social activity, a meeting place with friends, and a teacher for inspiration. Dunrobin was all of those things.

The school was almost square, and styled after hundreds of schools of that time. There were large windows along the north wall, and high up on the west wall, giving the students the benefit of excellent light.

At the beginning there were chemical toilets installed, but for several reasons they were found most unsatisfactory, and the usual two outhouses were built. At one time there was a large heater in the south west corner of the classroom, which fairly roasted those sitting next to it, while the rest shivered in misery. Later this heater was moved to the centre of the room, distributing the heat a little more evenly.

There was the traditional school clock, and a very elegant Aladdin lamp hanging from the ceiling in the centre of the room.

There was the teacher's desk, one drawer which contained the dreaded strap.

There was the organ, and in one corner a cupboard which served as a Library (top half) and a supply cupboard in the lower half, with its meagre supply of chalk, white and colored, a globe and a few other necessities.

The school always looked cheerful and bright, in spite of the lack of materials to work with. Stencils were used to decorate the top of the blackboard, with a suitable theme for the different seasons of the year.

The desks were made for double seating. Boys sat with boys and girls sat with girls. If by chance a boy was caught talking to a girl during class, he was often made to sit with her. Somehow this was a humilitating form of punishment, and a source of much amusement for the rest of the class.

Dunrobin did not have a water supply. Originally a well had been dug, cribbed and a pump installed. However, the water was found to be unfit for drinking, and the well was abandoned. Caretakers were required to supply drinking water, using the water coolers for storage. There was never enough, and in the summer was always lukewarm. A large tank at the back caught rain water which provided water for cleaning needs. In the winter snow had to be melted for the water supply.

One winter in the 1920's we were treated to hot soup for lunch. Lunches often consisted of jam or egg sandwiches, or just plain bread, and after freezing in the lunch pail were not very appetizing. A large kettle was provided in which to make the

soup, which was only canned soup added to boiling water. Older students took turns preparing and washing up, and no one minded. The soup was delicious with whatever we had in our lunch pails, and made the lunch hour something to look forward to.



*Class of 1920. Standing L to R: ?, Lizzie Naaykens, Caroline Naaykens, Jeanne Naaykens, ?, Lizzie Oleksink. Row 2: ?, ?, Katie Myketsy, Maggie Honeywich, Lena Tobish, ?, Cameron, ?. Row 3: Annie Tobish, Charlie Paley, Paul Tobish, ?, Stephen Honeywich, ?.*

In 1927 Canada celebrated 60 years of Confederation. Sheho as the urban centre planned a gala day to celebrate the occasion. One important event was a marching competition in which all local schools were to compete. Miss Christina Campbell was the teacher, and she must have despaired of making a good presentation of her class marching. But help was at hand. Arthur Merritt, a Veteran of World War I, offered to teach us to march in parade, with the result that Dunrobin won second place, and proud we were of the honor. When we stood at attention to sing O, Canada we meant it with all our hearts. We were not individuals, we were Dunrobin School.

For many years the teacher boarded with a family in the district, and it seemed to work very well. In the very early years the teacher stayed at the home of Samuel Auld. Later when the Auld family moved to Chilliwack, B.C., teachers made their home with the Joseph Bisschop family until eventually a teacherage was provided.

There were many social events for which the school was used. Dances, box and pie socials, and social evenings kept the life of the community alive and busy. One box social went down in the history of the school. A local bachelor, determined to buy the teacher's basket, found the bidding so competitive that he found himself paying one hundred dollars for the privilege of eating supper with the teacher.

Everyone came to the dances. The Mom's and Dad's had some lighthearted fun while the children slept peacefully on the row of desks piled along one wall.

The two most important events of the school year were the annual picnic, and the Christmas concert.



*Dunrobin school picnic of Silver Lake about 1920.*

Dunrobin and Newburn schools held their picnic together, on the west side of Silver Lake, in a lovely, open, yet sheltered spot, large enough for many activities. Some even took time to take a dip in the silvery water of the lake, or do a little fishing.

There were races for married men, and married women, wheel barrow, two-legged and the ever popular dash. There were pillow fights and tug'o'war, providing great entertainment for the spectators. There was a ball competition, with teams from Sheho, Foam Lake, and other places competing, and the cheering section was second to none. It was a day of relaxation, a meeting of friends, a highlight of the summer.

The Christmas concert is high in the memory list. It required the co-operation of teacher, students, parents, and trustees, to make it a truly happy occasion, especially for the small children. Mothers helped with costumes, listened patiently to "parts". Teachers of course had the most responsibility. When the day arrived, excitement ran high. School was dismissed at noon, giving everyone a chance to get ready, and to allow the school board to build the stage, set up planks for seating, and help set up the tree. Older students often stayed to help decorate, both tree and classroom. Red and green crepe paper garlands, bells and tinsel, were used to create a very festive atmosphere. The first item on the program was a Christmas carol, sung by all the students. The last item was the coming of Santa Claus, and the distribution of gifts, and bags of candy, nuts, and usually an orange or an apple, a rare treat for most of the children. The Christmas concert was the grand finale of the year, and every child took home a memory to cherish forever.

Dunrobin School No. 3110 was the heart of the community. To do justice to its history would require much more than space here will allow. This short

narrative must serve to pay tribute to the pioneers, and the teachers, the trustees, and all who helped to make it possible.

Copy of Dunrobin School Christmas Concert -1924

Recitation -A plan for a better Christmas -Annie Mickaluk  
 Quartette -Mr. Dolly -Marie Naaykens, Mary Myketsy, Mary Sawchuk, Margaret Logan  
 Recitation-Billy's Portion-Mike Myketsy  
 Recitation-A Christmas Dilemma -Mary Myketsy  
 Chorus -Silent Night -School  
 Recitation- A Voice for Santa Claus -Nick Michaluk  
 Recitation -Uncle John on a Toboggan -Harry Michaluk  
 Reading -A Letter to Santa Claus -Mike Myketsy  
 Drill-Poppy Drill  
 Monologue -My Sister's Wedding-Leo Cameron  
 Trio -Little Papoose -Maggie Logan, Annie Michaluk, Annie Sawchuk  
 Recitation -Christmas -Lena Tubish  
 Dialogue -The Meeting of the Juvenile Minstrels  
 A.arrival of Santa Claus  
 B.distribution of gifts  
 C.passing of the bags of candy  
 D.passing of the apples to grownups.  
 Kindly announce that all should remain seated until the apples are passed.  
 God Save the King

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