



Resilient Roots: A Short History of Catholic Education

By Patrick J. Brennan



Photo - Hamilton Public Library



Photo - Hamilton Public Library



Preface

Catholic Education certainly relates to the acquisition of knowledge and skills but, of equal importance, it is also the story of our people. Catholic schools, and parish churches, have been, appropriately, recognized by sociologists as great models of community building. This history, as prepared by our retired Director of Education, Patrick J. Brennan, reflects and reinforces these dynamic influences. This history is also being published at a noteworthy time, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of our school system becoming a regional Board, serving all of Hamilton-Wentworth.

Wave after wave of immigrants to the New World first found solace, a sense of belonging and, significantly, a sense of purpose and identity through their parish churches and schools. They learned the language of their new surroundings while preserving their native tongues and customs. As their children became educated and familiar with the new culture, they provided a bridge between and among cultures in their adopted country. This was achieved through daily personal interactions, special celebrations and community festivals and, especially, through religious celebrations. These ranged from sacramental occasions, such as First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Marriage, to special feast days which had special meaning to people from particular countries and even particular regions of those countries.

The Catholic Church and Catholic Education share the mission exhortation of Christ to 'Go forth and teach all nations.' As we approach the year 2,000 and the start of a new millennium, it is timely to re-visit our past and preserve for future generations the story of our Catholic Education community and its roots, both internationally and locally.

This document is, by design, concise and its brevity is intended to provide a basic and easy to digest history of our school system. At the same time, it is hoped that this document will whet the appetites of history enthusiasts for greater personal research through the use of the bibliography provided.

The story of Catholic Education is the story of the Christ's Church. As such, it is the story of those who, by their lives, demonstrated commitment to spiritual and intellectual growth in a way that was Christ-centred and mission-oriented. Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit are Wisdom, Knowledge, Counsel and Fortitude. Amid a high-technology world where gadgetry sometimes dominates, the strength and essence of Catholic Education continues to be its founder, Christ, and the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, as evidenced in the lives of the people serving, and served by, Catholic Schools.

**1994 Board of Trustees - Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic
Separate School Board**

Introducing the Author.....



Patrick J. Brennan

Patrick J. Brennan is noted for his historical knowledge of Catholic Education. Two years ago, he was commissioned by the Board of Trustees to research and write a concise history of this topic for distribution to our schools and, also in condensed form, for our ratepayers through Catholic School News.

Mr. Brennan retired in 1990 after 23 years as Director of Education for the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board. An internationally-recognized educator whose Canadian career spanned nearly three decades, his accomplishments have been numerous and varied, including the introduction of Heritage Languages (now 'International Languages') studies and the introduction of education in neighbourhood schools for the disabled.

He is perhaps best-known as the tenacious defender of Ontario Catholic Education's constitutional rights to fair funding. At a time of great discouragement for Catholic Education during the 1970s, Mr. Brennan was one of the leaders who continued to press for equity. Full funding equity has not yet been fully won, as we release this document in the autumn of 1994. Significant victories, however, had been achieved through his efforts, in concert with those of our Bishops, the Boards of Trustees, the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, staff and, of course, the laity, clergy and religious in our Catholic community.

The Catholic community's identity is an important link to our personal identities and to our quest to preserve Catholic schools for future generations. Our history and traditions are rich and significant, dating back to the days when Christ traversed the dusty roads of Palestine. This collection of essays begins with the early days of the Church as an educator and promoter of truth and continues through to the Middle Ages and into the Modern Era, with particular latter emphasis on Catholic Education in Ontario and Hamilton-Wentworth.

A native of Ireland who first taught school in Canada for the Sandwich West Separate School Board near Windsor, in 1962, Mr. Brennan is known as a avid storyteller and communicator of Catholic tradition. Those who know Mr. Brennan, and are familiar with his extensive knowledge of this subject, will especially appreciate his

efforts to produce an abridged history which will serve as a useful resource to this, and future generations, of Catholic teachers, students, parents and others interested in our heritage.

This binder format was conceived by the Board's Promotions and Communications Committee to allow for future inclusion of additional material from a variety of sources. Readers will note that the pages in this binder are not numbered sequentially from front to back but that each essay is numbered separately. This is to allow each essay, representing developments from each era, to stand alone and be used as individual resources when appropriate.

It is the hope of the Board of Trustees that school libraries throughout our system will share this resource among staff, and students, and thereby share the rich traditions, and mission, that Catholic Education represents. This Board's motto, adopted in 1994, is 'Believing, Achieving, Serving' (Croire / Réussir / Servir'). The combination of spiritual belief, achievement of academic and social excellence, and service to God and our community and world through the use of our talents is certainly reflected in these essays.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson
Board of Trustees 1991-94

Acknowledgements & Credits

Cover Photo Credits:

- Bottom left corner, Bishop Ryan and students. The Hamilton Public Library.
- Top left : St. Mary's Elementary School building, circa 1900. The Hamilton Public Library.
- Bottom right corner: Bishop Anthony F. Tonnos, Father Kyran Kennedy and students Michael Starcevic and David DiPaolo at blessing of new building for St. Jean de Brebœuf Catholic Secondary School, Acadia Drive, Hamilton, 1988. Board Photo by Frank Florio.
- Bottom middle: Staff viewing time capsule material from original Bishop Ryan Secondary School before its demolition in 1993. From left, Vincenza Travale, Associate Director of Education / Instructional Services (retired, 1994); Jackie Bajus, Principal; Fred Susi, Principal; Patrick Toth, Principal; Ugo Mio, Plant Operations Department. Board Photo by Frank Florio.

Publisher: The Board of Trustees, 1991-1994.

Editorial Board: The Promotions and Communications Committee: Trustees Father Ronald Synnott, Chairperson; Carolyn Cornale, Vice-Chairperson; Leo Blain, Adria DiBrizzi, Vicki DeSantis, Claudette Mikelsons, Chairperson, French Language Section; Administration: Jerry G. Ponikvar, Director of Education; Frank Florio, Communications Officer, committee secretary.

Transcription, Editing : Terri Campanella, Angela DeSimone, Marilena Dubé, Frank Florio, Kathy Speziale.

Manuscript Review and Comment: Ken Foyster, Diocese of Hamilton.

Supplementary Research: Jo-Anne Altenburg, Elayne Condello, Edd Gera, Leonard Varrasso.

Cover Graphics Coordination: Mike Shea.

Setup / Copying / Printing: Printing Department, The Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board: Mary Burpee, Dan Ciannavei, Theresa Martin, Mike Shea.

Table of Contents

Who are We?

Observations about our Catholic identity, how it has been shaped over the centuries and its influence in shaping the face of modern Catholic Education.

Catholic Education in the New World

The European settlers and the roots of Catholic Education in North America.

The Modern Era Unfolds

The early settlers of the New World, the Jesuits' influence, the leadership of Ontario's first Bishop and the legislative initiatives which enshrined the rights of Catholic schools.

Tracing Catholic Education's Roots in Hamilton-Wentworth

The region's first schools, the role of religious communities in Catholic Education and an annual Board budget of \$15,000!

Catholic Secondary Education: a tale of determination

When the fight for completed secondary funding appeared to be a lost cause, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools boldly opened new facilities.

Post-1945 Era created new demands

It was the era that came to be known as the ' Baby Boom' Years. Hamilton-Wentworth was growing quickly and so, too, was the demand for new schools.

The 1980's: seeking a solution to crowded secondary schools

Ontario legislators, and local school boards, try to come to grips with the pressing space problems facing our secondary schools.

French Language Schools

How deeply-committed families, clergy and religious established French language schools in Hamilton-Wentworth.

A Summing Up...

The writer's personal reflections on the past, present and future.

History at a Glance - Elementary Schools

History at a Glance - Secondary Schools

1969 Focus Flashbacks

Fast Facts / Bibliography

Who are we?

Grandparents and, yes, parents, will be aware of the great changes which have taken place in our Catholic schools over the last 25 or more years. Gone are the days of our insignificant minority status, our days of abject poverty, the days of the obvious presence of nuns, brothers and priests in our schools and the era when separate school boards depended on the charity of the diocese, the religious communities, the parish collection and dedicated, underpaid lay teachers.

Our schools have, notably in the past 25 years, by government fiat, the Supreme Court decisions, and the persistence of our Catholic people, taken their rightful place as full members of Ontario's publicly funded education system. Our elementary and secondary schools are now funded, though not fully so; our buildings are, on the whole, very satisfactory. Our staff, now composed of nearly 100 per cent lay people, is highly qualified, competent and well compensated.

Who are we? In this capsulized history, at the request of the 1991-94 Board of Trustees, we will attempt to briefly help you to gain an understanding of our identity and of our schools' identity.

Identity is very important to most people and it is also important to institutions. Who are you? You might respond: 'I'm Italian, Portuguese, Irish, African... I'm John, Maria, Mario, Leon... I'm Canadian, Italian-Canadian, Croatian-Canadian... I'm Murphy, Grosso.' Each of us has roots, family, special customs, times and occasions to celebrate. We also have values. When one adds up the total of these elements, and others, we can clearly see and state our identity. This same formula applies to Catholic Education: it has a name - Catholic; a history - 2000 years; a community - you and all of us - here and throughout the world. It has customs, celebrations, ties and tasks.

It began in Palestine about 2000 years ago. Jesus, who was called Rabbi, Master (i.e. teacher, or, in Latin, 'magister'), taught on the road, on the hillside, in the villages, the synagogues and the temple. This great teacher attracted people who wished to be with Him, follow His leadership, and embrace His teachings and values. He sent his graduates forth to "teach all nations". The apostles became the teaching leaders (magistri) and later with Peter as their chief teacher, they became the teaching college (magisterium) of our Catholic family. From this beginning, our people's story starts its journey to all corners of the world and into most facets of man's search for knowledge and learning.

The early history of the Church clearly shows that the role of teacher was of great significance in the community.

WHO ARE WE?

-2-

The Acts ch. 13 refers to "teachers and prophets" of the church in Antioch, Syria. This was the community which sent Paul and Barnabas to teach in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean islands. From then on, we find Christians participating in the learning centres and meeting places of the old world, e.g. Athens and Alexandria.

It was from such situations that the early fathers (the teachers or doctors) of the church emerged. Our community learned early in its history to adapt itself to existing institutions, to adopt the good in these institutions and to still maintain its vision and mission to practise and preach the Gospel.

During its first millennium, this small group of believers, in the face of terrible persecution, set-backs, divisions, and the recurrent wars and pogroms of the old world, had spread to three continents. It had, by its moral and religious teachings, reformed barbaric societies, placing before them the principles of noble conduct, the sanctity of life, of husband, wife and family, of employer and servant. It gave them a liturgy, by which to share with their members the worship and praise of God. Finally, it gave these societies institutions for education.

It was during the Middle Ages that the roots of our "school" based education developed in some communities and that elementary song schools and parish schools came into being. Pope Gregory the Great founded the "schola cantorum" in Rome and this initiative was soon emulated by many other dioceses. These choir schools and parish schools were frequently held in priests' houses. From such efforts, eventually, the cathedral schools emerged. These schools offered the seven liberal arts and frequently had the bishop as their principle teacher. Schools provided the training of many of the local church and lay leaders of the time. The most famous of the cathedral schools was that of Notre Dame of Paris.

In the following centuries, the monasteries in many countries became centres of learning and theology, scripture, sciences, languages, the arts, agriculture, architecture and many other facets of mankind's striving for truth. Eventually from these roots emerged the beginnings of our modern universities. In time, the older monastic orders were joined by the newer religious orders such as the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Augustinians, the Carmelites, and eventually, on the threshold of the Reformation and the counter Reformation, by the Jesuits and numerous communities of men and women who carried on their works of Christian charity and education outside the monastic setting.

WHO ARE WE?

-3-

Thus, on the eve of the great explorations and the development of the American colonies, the commitment to the education of the people was well established in those lands which were to have great influence in the development of the western continents. In France, most parishes provided education under the auspices of the local clergy or through the efforts of the newly developing religious communities of men and women. Similar efforts were evident in Spain. The founding of religious communities engaged in the work of education continued well into the nineteenth century and many of these communities were later to assume a prominent role in Catholic education in North and South America.

One must remember that the demands for advanced education in these early times were not as great as they are today. Basic literacy, the ability to convey simple and direct communications and to read, were accepted as reasonable ideals for all, other than the scholarly professional. It is fair to say, however, that only a minority of people in each society ever acquired those skills. Many schools and guilds also gave attention to practical subjects, the teaching of various trades, skills and arts. Attention was also given to grooming young people of the aristocracy for their roles in the societies of that time.

We must remember, however, that the social structures of Europe were far from primitive in those late days before the explorations of the western world. Many large cities already existed. Great centres of learning also provided many options to those who sought scholarship. Roads and other transportation systems were well established. It was a picture quite different from what was to be encountered by those who later ventured to bring education to North America and it was those same active religious communities to whom we referred earlier that were later to pioneer the work of Catholic education in North America.

Thus, the structure of Catholic institutions which emerged from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the counter Reformation periods, was moulded and formed by the experience of these times. Clearly, our ancestors in the mission of Catholic education have been the major builders of the foundations of education in western, many eastern, African and, later, Asiatic and American societies. From their ranks have emerged some of education's great heroes - St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Domenic, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Peter Canisius, St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, William of Occam, Roger Bacon, Erasmus, Dante, Kieran, Kevin, Columba, Angela Merici and so many more giants of education. To those who may be concerned over the difficulties we face in Catholic education today, I suggest that they look back and see the storms, the persecutions, the faithless societies, and the enormous transitions which our forbearers have surmounted though having little of the resources that we have today. Surely our challenges are no greater than those faced by our forebearers.

+

Catholic Education in the New World

The story of the expansion of European settlement in the Americas contains some elements of which we, the descendants of Europeans, cannot be proud. However, with few exceptions, those responsible for the transplantation of Catholic education deserve our admiration and thanks for the great effort they brought to their mission. These pioneers commenced the building of our Catholic educational tradition in what was a great wilderness, devoid of the comforts and conveniences which they had accepted as normal for centuries previously in European society.

We must not fall into the trap of reading history in a rear view mirror. It is important to understand that these people were creatures of the state of knowledge of the times, the social structures from which they emerged and the priorities which life in a frontier society demanded. With this background they commenced to build their institutions and design their activities in the best way they could. In view of these circumstances, we cannot but marvel at their devotion and commitment. They planted the seed in remote areas and today it has grown to be a great garden which encompasses the whole continent.

The two great influences in the early history of Catholic education on the continent were, of course, the Spanish influence and the French influence. The Spanish influence flowed out of Mexico into what are now the states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and Florida. The French influence, of course, was focused mainly in Quebec, in what we now call the Maritimes and in that central part of the continent stretching from Lake Michigan to New Orleans.

The Spanish political expansion in the southern areas was always followed by the establishment of Catholic missions intended mainly to serve the indigenous native peoples of these areas. By 1630, about fifty such missions had been established in New Mexico and Arizona. Most notable amongst the leaders of these Franciscan missionaries was Father Serra. His predecessors and successors invariably founded schools at most of their missions. Today these missions are remembered very often by their beautiful Spanish names, Sante Fe, San Diego, San Carlos, San Antonio, San Gabriele, San Juan de Capistrano, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Los Angeles, San Jose and many others.

The greatest emphasis in the educational efforts of these missions was directed towards the education of the native peoples. Much of the education was, of course, directed towards having them understand and accept the Christian Gospels. In some cases, the school was a little colony in itself providing not only for the education in the faith but for training in agriculture, other practical skills and literacy.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE NEW WORLD

-2-

Some of these missions were not unlike the early Christian enclaves where the community shared not only in the work but also the food, the prayers, the liturgy and the support of the community. In time, these activities were also initiated in Florida. The City of St. Augustine in Florida is famous as Florida's first town but also for the fact that it had a classical school in operation in the western hemisphere as early as 1606. Early in this period, the Jesuits had also established a university in Mexico City, giving it the distinction of being the first university on this continent.

The activity of these mission schools was disrupted from time to time by the politics of these regions (the conflict between Spanish and French, between English, French and Spanish and, later, by the expansion of the United States). Despite these disruptions, the remnants of this structure are still evident today and an even more sophisticated structure has emerged from the tradition of these simple missions.

Future generations, of European immigrants, settled on the east coast of what is now the United States. The Catholic population in these groups (despite persecution) quickly set about the establishment of schools to serve their children. From these two roots the largest Catholic school system in the world has emerged, i.e. the Catholic school system of the United States, which serves millions of young people, from early childhood education to the most distinguished graduate schools in the world.

THE FRENCH INFLUENCE

Of more interest to our community, of course, was the development of Catholic education in the early French colonies. In 1608, a Quebec colony was founded by Champlain and the settlers became involved in the fur trade. In 1617 the first farm land was cleared and the signal given to the homeland of the enormous potential of this land for settlement. In 1615, the Recollet Fathers had established a mission in Quebec which also included a school. By 1616 a brother, Pacifique, had a school in operation in Trois Rivières. Two years following that a Father Lecaron had a school in operation in the same area.

Both schools provided mainly for Indian children. It was not until 1639 that the Ursuline Sisters arrived. These qualified and trained teachers set immediately about the task of providing for the education of the settlers and the Indians. It is said that within five months two of the nuns had prepared to instruct the Indian children in their own language. The Jesuits who had now become involved also composed a grammar and dictionary in the native language and translated the catechism into that language. The development of schools for the people in Quebec progressed rapidly over the next thirty years with the Jesuits establishing La petite école.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE NEW WORLD

-3-

In Quebec, the Ursulines founded another school for borders and day girls. Marguerite Bourgeois opened a school for boys and girls and later for girls only in Montreal. There was also the building and the opening of the Le grand séminaire, the opening of the School of the Salesians in Montreal, the petit séminaire for boys for the education of priests, and the St. Joachim schools. The effort totalled about 32 schools by the beginning of the new century. As with the schools in the Spanish mission, a great emphasis was given to the religious formation of the young people and to the application of that formation to right living, culture and tradition.

A number of the schools also provided for the training of boys in practical trades. The religious schools, operated by religious women, also contributed notably to the promotion of culture amongst their students, particularly the young women of Quebec. Many of the refined skills of weaving, lace making, home keeping, music and dance owe their development to the work of these good teachers.

As the work of providing education for the children of the settlers and the natives in the St. Lawrence Valley progressed, the Jesuit missionaries were penetrating the deep forest, through the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi Valley. One well known example of their great work was that amongst the Hurons at the Ste. Marie among the Hurons village settlement. There, Brebeuf and his companions introduced the native people to the Gospel and also provided them with the opportunities to learn new skills and to benefit from the teaching skills of one of the church's greatest teaching communities. In the far reaches of the French colonies in New Orleans, the Ursuline sisters joined with the Capuchin Friars and the Jesuits in establishing schools for boys and girls in what was then, and for many years afterwards, a notorious city.

As the French settlements evolved into the 1700's, we find a very well organized and effective system of education being provided by our French Catholic community. In most instances this system was planted, cultivated and developed by the religious communities of men and women with the support of their bishops and priests and the commitment of the Catholic people. By 1763, these French colonies had developed a system of education which was without match on the rest of the continent, and for that matter, without match in many of the countries of Europe.

Thus, in the aftermath of the conquest of Quebec, the new British overlords occupied a land mainly populated by a French speaking Catholic people whose religious family had structured what was a very effective school system for the times. Therefore, in formulating the terms of the Quebec Act, the instrument under which the new colony

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE NEW WORLD

-4-

was to be governed, the government accepted the reality of adding that system of education with its connection to our religious family. This decision, we shall see, became the historic and legal precedent from which eventually evolved the denominational option which we enjoy in Canada.

Each generation must preserve and develop the treasures passed on by the previous generations. Those of us in Catholic education in Canada must remember that, to a great degree, the wisdom and the commitment of our French forebearers in the Quebec colonies is something of which our Catholic family should be proud and grateful.

+

The Modern Era Unfolds

As our story enters the 19th century, it is worth remembering that opportunities for education at what we call the elementary, secondary and university levels were almost completely under the auspices of the churches or private individuals. Our Catholic people, of course, were the most widely involved in all levels of education. Governments were beginning to become interested, mainly because the emerging democratic societies demanded a literate population and also because the emerging needs of the industrial revolution required a greater number of people with literary, numeracy and scientific skills.

Many powerful groups also saw government involvement in education as a means of achieving other objectives, such as the promotion of loyalty to certain governments, philosophies or religious positions. From this collection of motives came the movement to create public education, i.e. education funded and, to a great extent, controlled by government, education which would also be available to the common people. This activity, in most cases, did not exclude the important role of religious education in schools. With few exceptions, people believed that religious values, doctrine and Bible study were an important part of education in all schools.

The presence of Catholic education in Ontario goes back to the effort of the Jesuits in Huronia. Saint Marie among the Hurons and its subsidiary missions were similar in some ways to the missions of the Spanish south-west. They provided the native people with the opportunity to hear the word of God while also sharing in the knowledge and skills of their European brothers and sisters.

The beginnings of Catholic educational structures, as we know them today, owes much to the work of Bishop Alexander Macdonnell, the first bishop of what we now call Ontario. Macdonnell was of Scottish highland stock. Displaced from his native place, like so many of his compatriots, he studied for the priesthood in France and Spain. Later, he returned to minister to his people now congregated, often unemployed and living in poverty, in the big cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. He cooperated with others in forming a Scottish regiment, the Glengarry Highlanders, and he served as its chaplain during the Napoleonic period and its involvement in suppressing the Irish rebellion against Britain in 1798. The regiment was disbanded after that episode.

He immediately lent his support to appeals to the government to give land grants in Canada to the disbanded soldiers and their families. This appeal was granted and many of these soldiers and their families sailed for Canada and settled in what is now the county of Glengarry in eastern Ontario.

THE MODERN ERA UNFOLDS

-2-

A few years later (1804), he joined the settlers as their priest, having appealed to the government for funds to pay teachers before he left his native land. Macdonnell quickly set about providing schools for his people. These schools, for many years, used Gaelic as the language of instruction. Macdonnell was incessant in his appeals to the colonial authorities for support for his schools. This wily Scot used every argument possible and played on every fear of the authorities to make his point. Despite the bigotry and the anti-Catholic attitudes of the times, he was remarkably successful.

In 1826, he was appointed the first Bishop of Ontario and given a diocese stretching from the Quebec border to the Detroit River, from Georgian Bay to Niagara. As bishop, his interest was now directed towards the good of all the settlements in this vast diocese. We know that he actively encouraged the formation of Catholic schools in Kingston, Sandwich (Windsor), York (Toronto), Amherstburg, Guelph, Peterborough and Perth, Bytown (Ottawa) and Prescott. Often, he had his priests teach in these schools or share their salaries with the teachers.

Bishop Macdonnell, who also for a time served as a member of the legislative council and who was a staunch Conservative, served his people through those years prior to 1841 when the idea and the need for common schools accessible to all were being debated and formulated. As the first Ontario Bishop, he clearly promoted the rights of Catholics to their own schools, conducted in their own tradition and committed to the development of our special Canadian Catholic identity.

Prior to 1841, some efforts had been made by authorities to provide education. Grammar (secondary) schools were set up in some districts with modest government support. These schools catered mainly to the wealthy and were often under the control of the Church of England (Anglican). Private individuals operated small schools, often in their own homes, and church groups and parishes in some areas provided mainly elementary education.

The 1830s were rife with debate on the need for popular education. Political and editorial comment put great emphasis on the need for truly common schools. A significant part of that debate was concerned with the religious aspects of education and the role of denominational interests in it. All agreed on the need for religious values, moral values and Biblical knowledge to be included as part of general education. Presbyterian and Anglican spokesmen were very anxious for Bible studies to be included in all schools and, if possible, for these major denominations to have their own schools. Catholics and other denominations, of course, also had similar sentiments. With the scattered frontier population and the small pockets of various denominational groups spread along that frontier, it was obvious that a wide open denominational option would not be practical.

THE MODERN ERA UNFOLDS

-3-

The debate on the 1841 Act continued. It was proposed by Mr. William Morris, a prominent Presbyterian, and Mr. Robert deBlacquiere, a prominent Church of England layman, that distinct common schools for both Protestants and Catholics be allowed. Such argumentation led to the inclusion of a clause in the first School Act of 1841 (Section 11 xi). This section recognized the right of any number of inhabitants of a common school district to dissent for religious reasons. It allowed the dissenters (both Catholic and Protestant) to elect trustees, as did the majority, and gave these the same powers as the majority common school trustees.

These schools were to be subject to the same inspection as the majority schools and they were to receive public financial support in proportion to the number of students enrolled. In 1843 a new act "for the establishment and maintenance of common schools in Upper Canada" was promulgated. Section 55 of that Act allowed the establishment of separate common schools for Catholics or Protestants depending on the religious affiliation of the teacher. Section 56 provided for funds to be made available to such schools on the basis of student attendance. Ryerson, a Methodist minister, was appointed to head the new government department established to manage education. The legislation was well received but its implementation gave rise to a continuous struggle by the Catholic population to have the spirit of that legislation respected. This struggle continued into the 1990's.

During the 1850s, a growing tension developed over the existence of Catholic common schools. Various authorities applied strict, narrow or unfair interpretations to the legislation governing these schools. The great influx of Catholic immigration from Ireland, most of which was poor and Catholic, caused significant increase in proportion of Catholics in the total population. These immigrants had just left a land where a school system had been set up to wean them from the Catholic faith and their Gaelic culture. They were, therefore, familiar with the need to resist similar pressures here in Canada. They were also stigmatized because of their poverty, their Catholic faith and their anti-British and establishment sentiments. They found great comfort, however, in their parishes and in their Catholic schools.

Authorities in Toronto, for example, sought by strict interpretation of the Act to restrict Catholic school boards to one school in any public school district. Toronto was one district. Little effort was also made by the authorities to finance Catholic schools. Much of the anti-Catholic rhetoric emanating from the U.S. and Britain was then to be heard in the churches, newspapers and public debate in Ontario. Some organizations called for the abolition of separate schools and significant leaders in public education also argued in favour of their abolition. However, times had changed and strong Catholic voices in the hierarchy, the laity and in the newspapers came to the fore to defend our rights.

THE MODERN ERA UNFOLDS

-4-

Despite everything, the genesis of Canadian politics and goodwill prevailed and progress was made, though grudgingly. Districts and cities were allowed to have more than one separate school and separate schools were allowed access to local taxes and relieved of the burden of paying for public school taxes. They also received provincial funds.

The reforms and the debates culminated in the passing in 1863 of the Scott Act. This Act was called after Richard W. Scott, a leading Catholic legislator. The Act became the basis of the rights we have as Catholic school supporters as enshrined in the British North America Act and the Constitution of Canada. The bill facilitated the formation of Catholic school boards in villages, towns and rural areas; it also allowed boards to combine, in certain circumstances; required a separate school supporter to declare his tax support for Catholic schools once rather than every year; made separate school supporters responsible for debts incurred for separate schools; required that separate school teachers submit to the same examinations as public school teachers.

There was no specific reference to secondary education. It was, in many cases already being provided in the common schools, both public and separate. Prior to Confederation, however, Catholic voices had expressed the wish that they should also have that privilege when and if it was provided to the people of Ontario.

As our Canadian forefathers set about forming the political union which is now the Canadian federal state, they, of necessity, had to ensure unity by reconciling the constitution with the priorities of the provinces and of the social, religious, political and linguistic groups that made up the British North America of 1867. It was, therefore, necessary to ensure the protection of the educational rights and privileges of religious minorities in both Ontario and Quebec. The well established Protestant school system of Quebec demanded that it have its existing linguistic and religious rights protected and, in like manner, so did the Catholic minority of the province of Ontario.

The protection extended by the new Canadian federal state is, therefore, reflected in the British North America Act, 1867, Section 93. This Act was, in fact until recently, the constitution of Canada. The Section prohibits any jurisdiction "enacting laws which prejudicially affect any rights and privileges with respect to denominational schools existing in law in a province prior to the union". It also confers on the Protestant school system in Quebec "the same rights and privileges granted to Roman Catholic separate schools in Ontario". Further, it provides that "where Catholic or Protestant separate schools exist in a province at the union or are established after

THE MODERN ERA UNFOLDS

-5-

the union by the legislature of a province, such systems will have the right of appeal to the Governor General in Council from any act of any provincial authority which will affect their rights or privileges".

This last provision is included in the Act to give the Government of Canada the right to make remedial laws in cases where provincial governments neglect their responsibilities towards denominational schools and in circumstances where the representatives of these schools have appealed to the Governor General in Council.

Despite this constitutional protection, the struggle for fair and equitable treatment continued to the end of the 1800s and continued through the last decade of the 20th century. The right to establish and maintain secondary schools was not granted to Roman Catholics in the 1870s, although many Catholic schools continued to offer secondary school programs as an extension of their elementary school system. Clearly, the intent from the beginning was that the dual school system would have its partners treated equally. This spirit was evident in the practice in Quebec and in other provinces. Acts promulgated in the late 1800s allowed for corporations to share their tax base between public and separate schools. The exercise of that right became well nigh impossible because of strict interpretation placed upon it by governments. Some relaxation of this condition has taken place recently.

It was only in 1984 that the government of the province acted to remedy this situation by extending government support to grades 11 and 12 (including Ontario Academic Credits) in separate schools. This decision of the government was supported by the Supreme Court of Canada and very liberally interpreted by that Court. Some movement has taken place in providing for access to commercial and industrial assessment but the basic principle which existed in the original separate school legislation of providing for proportionate distribution based on pupil enrolment has not yet been achieved.

This brief overview of the history of our provincial school system has necessarily concentrated on law making. We should not forget, however, that although we had a financially impoverished school system, we had also a very wealthy school system in terms of the wonderful people who made it possible to exist and to accomplish the great things that it did. A great deal of credit for this must, of course, be given to the religious communities of women and men who for very little reward sacrificed their lives in the service of our Catholic people. They provided teachers who, in the 1800s, were usually better qualified than those available in the rest of the schools of this province.

THE MODERN ERA UNFOLDS

-6-

We must also remember the courageous work of our bishops and clergy, who were always at the side of our people in their struggle to maintain their rights and to provide for the Christian education of their children. Let us remember, also, these great lay leaders who spoke publicly in the press and in the legislatures, and these ordinary men and women who did much to make it possible for us to have the great effective and strong school system we have today. Let them not be forgotten.

+

Tracing Catholic Education's roots in Hamilton-Wentworth

Our Catholic ancestors were present in this area long before it was settled by people of European ancestry. About 1615, Etienne Brulé passed through the area on his way to the south of Lake Erie. His accounts of the Neutral Indians who lived in this area inspired a Recollet priest, Fr. Daillon, to come to the area to spread the Gospel. Some thirteen years later, St. Jean de Brebeuf, and Fr. Joseph Chaumonot, came down from Ste. Marie, in an attempt to establish a mission among the Neutral Indians of this area. Both efforts were failures.

The Hurons, the middlemen in the French-Indian trade cycle, feared that the priests would give the Neutrals a direct access to the Quebec trade. They influenced the Neutrals with hostile and fearful tales of what would result from their association with 'the black robes', as the priests were called. St. Jean could very well, therefore, have walked over the site of the present Brebeuf school (on Acadia Drive in Hamilton) as he wandered between the villages above and below the escarpment.

Subsequent visits by LaSalle with Frs. Galline and de Casson, in 1669, and by Fr. Hennepin and LaSalle, in 1671, saw them visiting Dundas, LaSalle Park and other parts of the Hamilton area. More than a century was to pass before the records showed the presence of Fr. Le Dru in 1794, and a Fr. Burke in 1796. Fr. Burke was chaplain to the garrison in Niagara and later became the first Bishop of Halifax, in Nova Scotia.

It was not until 1829 that a Fr. John Cullen took residence in Dundas and served the area north to Guelph, east beyond Hamilton and Burlington. Hamilton's first priest, a Fr. William McDonald, arrived in 1838.

Father McDonald who founded the first parish, St. Mary's, was followed by the priest who made the first step in the establishment of Catholic schools in Hamilton. However, it appears, that the first Catholic school in Hamilton-Wentworth, St. Augustine's, was set-up in the rectory in Dundas in 1847. We have noted in earlier articles that many of the first parish priests shared their rectories with the first Catholic schools.

Father McDonald's successor, Fr. Edward Gordon, was a convert from Anglicanism and he arrived at St. Mary's Parish in Hamilton in 1846. With the assistance of the Bishop of Toronto, Armand de Charbonel, he brought the Sisters of St. Joseph to Hamilton in 1852. They immediately set about establishing a private school. It seems, also, that some individuals, in and about the Hamilton area, were also operating small private schools in their own homes. From these seeds has emerged the very large Catholic school system which we have today in Hamilton-Wentworth.

Tracing Catholic Education's roots in Hamilton-Wentworth

-2-

Fr. Gordon was not blessed with good health and, six years after his arrival, he was glad to have Bishop de Charbonnel send him a helper priest.

The Bishop had brought over, from France, Fr. Augustine Carayon, who was eventually given the task of bringing members of the Catholic community together to avail themselves of the rights given to them by the new Common Schools Act. So it was, that in 1855, the first separate school board was formed in Hamilton, and it immediately set about building two schools. St. Patrick's School was erected at Hunter Street and Ferguson Avenue and St. Mary's at Mulberry and Park Streets. As a point of interest, it was in that same year that the Diocese of Hamilton was established and Bishop John Farrell appointed its first bishop. Fr. Carayon returned to his native France some years afterwards.

These first two schools were placed in the charge of the Sisters of St. Joseph. A few lay men teachers were employed to teach the senior boys. Thus began the tremendous and heroic contribution of the religious family of St. Joseph to the youth and to the people of Hamilton-Wentworth. These great women had, in the two years previous to the opening of the schools, attended to the dead, dying and sick of the 1854 cholera epidemic in which over 550 people died. Now, without further hesitation, they launched themselves into building our Catholic school community.

In this present age, when we think of women assuming key and senior roles in institutions, it is well to remind ourselves that the Sisters of St. Joseph were already occupying such roles in the 1800s, leading schools and later leading hospitals, orphanages and assuming other major roles in our Catholic community. It is sad to say the community does not seem to be fully aware of the competence, responsibilities, challenges and important role assumed by this noble band of women. In four short years, after the arrival of three nuns in Hamilton, they had established a school within their convent, commenced their work of providing for orphans, bravely offered care, solace and assistance during the cholera epidemic and then assumed responsibility for the first two separate schools. This initial explosive start was just an indication of the tremendous effect that this band of women were to have, not only on Hamilton, but on this and other dioceses in the many years ahead.

This beginning of our separate schools also clearly demonstrated the loyalty of the clergy to meeting the needs of the people in their pastoral care. The land for both schools was provided by Fr. Gordon, on behalf of the diocese, and from that time to the present day, the Catholic school system has been blessed by the presence and leadership and the sacrifice of succeeding clergy and bishops.

TRACING CATHOLIC EDUCATION'S ROOTS IN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

-3-

While historical facts clearly bear witness to the contribution of the religious and the clergy in the establishment and the maintenance of our school system, one must also recognize the commitment of our own lay people from the very beginning. The money to build the two schools was raised within a few months of the formation of the first separate school board and this money was used to provide those schools within the first year. From the beginning, lay teachers have participated in assisting our people in providing for the education of their children, and for a long time they did so with very little material reward.

One of the notable students in attendance at St. Patrick's on that memorable day in September of 1855 was a Cornelius Donovan. Cornelius was later to teach in his old alma mater and subsequently at St. Mary's School. He was an exemplary teacher, fully involved with his students, in sports and music. Later, he was to be appointed one of the first inspectors of separate schools in Ontario. He was a fine example of those lay persons who would continue to be the backbone of our school system. He died before he achieved his fiftieth birthday.

The direct management and, to a great extent, the governance of the growing Catholic school system was usually carried by members of the clergy. While the initiative to open schools seemed to be taken frequently by newly appointed parish priests, it was evident that in doing so they were responding to the wishes and needs of their parish communities. Evidence of this, is the obvious willingness of these same parishioners to carry the cost of building the many new churches as well as new schools.

In most cases, the school preceded the church and was used for Mass, the Sacraments and parish activities. The old St. Patrick's School at Hunter Street and Ferguson Avenue served as the founding chapel of St. Patrick's parish for many years.

In most cases, the land for new schools was either transferred without cost to the Separate School Board by the bishop or sold at a nominal cost. Thus, although in law there was a distinct difference between the school board and the diocesan corporation, the Catholic family relationship and interdependence were always evident and a source of great strength.

Within one year of the opening of St. Patrick's and St. Mary's, a new St. Augustine's School had opened in Dundas. The leadership for this was given by Fr. John O'Reilly, a hard working missionary priest who not only served Dundas but also missions in Woodstock, Norwich, Freelon, Trafalgar and parts of the Niagara Peninsula.

TRACING CATHOLIC EDUCATION'S ROOTS IN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

-4-

The first separate school in Dundas was housed in the building which later served as the St. Augustine's parish rectory. A framed school was opened some years later at Alma and Sydenham Streets. Successive additions, alterations and reconstructions have been conducted at that site every since. As a matter of interest, the old school (the rectory) building is older than St. Augustine's Church itself. The original church on Hatt Street was destroyed by fire in 1863.

In 1860, the St. Vincent School was opened on Pearl Street, in Hamilton. In later years it was to become the Cathedral Commercial School for Girls. The late 1850s and 1860s saw rapid development taking place in the north end of the City of Hamilton. The harbour was becoming a major transportation centre and the new railway tied in with the developing road system to supply the rural areas south, west and north of Hamilton. Industries relating to the railroad and the harbour had also commenced developing.

The north end area of Hamilton was becoming rapidly populated and so, in 1864, the school board acquired an old building, "The Malt House", on Ferrie Street, and converted it for use as a school. This was the first St. Lawrence Separate School: upstairs for the girls, downstairs for the boys. It had an addition placed on it soon afterwards. Some years later, it was demolished and a new school built. In recent times, that school was itself replaced by the present St. Lawrence.

In 1865, the Loretto Sisters arrived in Hamilton and opened their academy on King Street. This school immediately commenced to provide education to young ladies for elementary and secondary schooling. The Loretto Sisters later assumed responsibility for the St. Charles School which was located close to their convent. This was the beginning of their involvement in many other schools in Hamilton over the following 100 years.

In the last three decades of the 1800s, a tremendous amount of school building activity took place around the old St. Mary's Cathedral. The original school building, which was beside the church and later became a chapel and a library, was augmented in 1871 by the building of a new St. Mary's School (sometimes called the Model School). This project was undertaken with the strong support of Bishop Farrell's successor, Bishop Crinnon. The school was named Sacred Heart Model School, in 1882. It offered programs at what we now call the secondary level and was located at Sheaffe and MacNab Streets. In 1890, the Bishop's house was converted to a school and named Holy Angels School. This elementary school served the St. Mary's area until the middle of the following century when, in 1945, it became the first French Language school in the City of Hamilton to serve the children of French language heritage.

TRACING CATHOLIC EDUCATION'S ROOTS IN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

-5-

As we can see, the influence of the Catholic school board was beginning to stretch east, west and north. To the west had come St. Vincent and St. Charles schools; to the north, St. Lawrence and, in 1889, it was felt necessary to build a school on Smith Avenue near Cannon Street. This school was called St. Thomas School. It was later to be named St. Brigid's School because of the confusion that arose between it and the St. Thomas Aquinas School (subsequently the Basilica School). This decision also conformed with the strong Irish traditions of St. Patrick's parish.

At the turn of the century, there were 10 Catholic schools functioning in the city of Hamilton. There were about 40 teachers employed by the Separate School Board and individual salaries were about \$125.00 per annum. The pupil/teacher ratio was approximately 43 to 1. It is interesting to note that some years later their salaries were down to \$108.00 per annum. At that time, the Board was very dependent on local assessment. Less than seven per cent of its revenue came from the provincial government. The rest had to be raised by the taxes on the properties of Roman Catholics, very modest school fees and donations from other sources. By the end of the 1800s, the Board's annual budget was approximately \$15,000. These frugal trustees managed to have a surplus in most years.

It was clear also at the end of the century that the frugality of the trustees, the generosity of the people, the dedication of the clergy, particularly the Bishop, and the tremendous commitment of the teachers, had assured a good foundation for what would become a great school system.

Early in the new century, the school system continued to vigorously move to the east. In 1908, St. Ann's was opened. The new school was built for \$10,000. The money was borrowed from the Bishop at 4.5 per cent per annum. Soon afterwards, in 1912, came the new St. Patrick's School on the present location (East Avenue bounded by King Street East and Main Street East). In the same year, St. Thomas Aquinas School was opened on Hunt Street (St. Thomas Aquinas later became the Basilica School). 1912 also saw the opening of St. Mary's Lyceum which was first known as the Cathedral School, thus beginning the Cathedral tradition. We will deal with the story of our Catholic Secondary Schools later. 1913 saw the building of a new St. Ann's Elementary School and, soon afterwards, the parish was divided and Holy Family parish came into existence in 1920. The school was opened in three surplus army buildings and Miss Elda Nugent was one of its first teachers.

TRACING CATHOLIC EDUCATION'S ROOTS IN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

-6-

Soon afterwards, in 1922, the new Holy Rosary School was opened to provide for the growing immigrant population in that area. Two years later, in the west end, an abandoned Presbyterian church on Locke Street was purchased and remodelled to become the St. Joseph's School. It was placed in charge of the Sisters of Loretto.

With the development of the city, we see St. John's School coming into existence in 1929. St. Emeric's and Canadian Martyrs' (in the west end) in 1930 and, in the same year, the building of St. Augustine's School on Mulberry Street in downtown Hamilton. In 1933, St. Thomas Aquinas School on Hunt Street was rebuilt and its name changed to Christ the King. That building is now the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Hamilton. Thus we come to the end of another milestone in the history of the city. The Board got a few years rest from expansion, but some hectic times were to come in the next decade.

The 1940s, 50s and 60s saw the school system grappling to cope with the enormous influx of immigrants and the post war baby boom. There were additions to Holy Family in 1945, the new Sts. Peter and Paul School in 1948, an addition to St. John's in '49, and in 1951 the building of St. Eugene's and additions to St. Patrick's and Sts. Peter and Paul. In 1953 came Blessed Sacrament and St. Helen's School, followed by Our Lady of Lourdes in 1957, Regina Mundi in 1959 and the new St. Mary's School in '60. The new French Language elementary school, Notre Dame, on Cumberland Avenue was built in 1962 while 1963 brought St. Vincent de Paul and the St. Thomas Aquinas School at Pearl and Nelson Streets. Projects in 1965 included Holy Name School on Belmont Avenue and the new Holy Rosary at Gage and Whitfield. Corpus Christi, St. Bernard's, St. Charles' and Holy Spirit were projects in '66, and St. Michael's and St. Christopher's in 1967. The new St. Lawrence School was built in 1967, and St. Ann's Junior and St. Daniel's School in 1969. The new Christ the King School was built in 1970, St. David and St. Jerome's Schools in 1971, St. Columba on Main Street in 1972, St. Thomas More Comprehensive School in 1972, St. Anthony of Padua and Catherine of Siena and St. Joan of Arc and on and on the list goes.

Many of you will be familiar with the schools that have been built since the mid-1970s. It is important to note that, while these new schools were being opened and positioned to serve the growing population, many additions were also being undertaken to existing schools to cope with the burgeoning population in the older areas. While this, of necessity, has been a quick summary of the development of the school system up until the mid 1970s, it must be said that each step, each school, each addition has a great story in its own right. Many things can be said about those who were involved in bringing about each increment in the growth of the school system but the system as it stands is their greatest testimony.

**TRACING CATHOLIC EDUCATION'S ROOTS
IN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH**

-7-

In a subsequent short section, we will trace the development of our secondary school system from its earliest days beside the old St. Mary's Cathedral.

+

Catholic Secondary Education: a tale of determination

Hamilton-Wentworth area Catholic Schools have a widespread reputation for providing service to all the Catholic children of the region. This reputation has been gained from their chronicle of more than 140 years of effort to respond to the needs of all Catholic children and frequently to children who are not Catholic. One aspect of that service which has won special recognition has been our community's determination to provide secondary or high school education for all our students.

The beginnings of secondary education can be traced to that cradle of Catholic education in Hamilton, i.e. the Sheaffe, Park, MacNab, Mulberry Streets area. There, in the shelter of the old St. Mary's Cathedral, individual students stayed on in the common school and mastered advanced commercial, math, language and science skills. Some of these students also received private tutoring in these subjects from individuals in the community.

In 1865, at the invitation of Bishop John Farrell, our first Bishop, three Loretto Sisters were invited to come from Guelph and establish the Loretto Academy. This school immediately set about providing kindergarten to senior secondary education. The Academy and its students have had a profound affect on the history of the Catholic community, and for that matter, on the community as a whole since many of the non-Catholic parents in the community chose to have their children educated by the 'Ladies of Loretto.'

In 1871, with the support of Bishop Farrell's successor, The Most Reverend Peter Crinnon, the Catholic School Board opened the new Model School. This school was later to be known as Sacred Heart and, subsequently, as St. Mary's Girls' School. It was the beginning of an organized approach by the Catholic school system to providing Catholic secondary education for boys and girls in Hamilton. This then remained the core of the Catholic secondary educational system in Hamilton to the end of the 1800s and for the beginning of the new century. By the end of the first decade of the century, however, Monsignor John Mahony and Father Peter J. Maloney (who was then Superintendent of Catholic Schools), with the encouragement of Bishop Dowling, had established a Catholic high school. It is interesting to note that even in those times this had to be accomplished despite much opposition by a few individuals and groups in the community.

It was at this early stage that the commitment was made by the pastors of the city to subsidize a new high school. This approach to the financing of Catholic education continued until 1984.

CATHOLIC SECONDARY EDUCATION: A TALE OF DETERMINATION

- 2 -

The St. Mary's Lyceum was completed in 1912. Originally, it was called the 'Cathedral School' and later reverted to the name 'St. Mary's Lyceum'. It was used mainly as a girls' school until 1928 when it was designated for elementary school use. St. Mary's School on Mulberry Street in 1913 provided high school courses strictly for boys, but girls were allowed to participate in the commercial department of that school. The first middle school classes of boys who wrote the provincial examinations in 1914 were under the care of Mr. John M. Bennett. Dr. John Bennett, as he was to be called later, became an inspector of separate schools and served for many years in Toronto. Members of his family continued to serve Catholic education.

It is interesting to note that from the very beginning these schools were staffed by priests, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Loretto and lay persons. In 1916, the set up was re-organized and the girls section was placed under the auspices of the Sisters of St. Joseph who took charge of the 'Girls' School'. A prominent role in the history of our schools began at about this time with the coming of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Other important service to our schools was provided over the years by various religious communities, including the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny and the Felician Sisters. In our French language schools, the Sisters of Charity played a significant role for more than 40 years, until their departure in June, 1994.

Nothing succeeds like success. So, by 1921, the accommodation for the boys was deemed to be inadequate and, at the invitation of the then Dean Cassidy, the boys were moved to new quarters on the upper floor of what was then a relatively new St. Patrick's School. It was staffed at that time by Christian Brothers, lay persons and a number of diocesan priests. Brother Austin became the first principal at that location. He was later to be succeeded by John Bennett and Pat Sheridan.

In 1924, the brothers withdrew from the senior school and Father Patrick O'Brien assumed the role of principal. Father O'Brien was to be succeeded in 1929 by Pat Sheridan.

As a matter of historical record, it should be noted that some of the pastors who have had a profound influence for good on this community have served at various times as principals of the Cathedral School -- Father Arthur O'Brien, Father Bernard Harrigan, Father John Noonan, Father Blake Ryan, Father Ed Lawlor, Father John Mattice, Father Fergus Duffy, Father Ron Cote, Father Philip Sherlock and Father Alex Kramer.

CATHOLIC SECONDARY EDUCATION: A TALE OF DETERMINATION

-3-

In a scenario which has been very familiar to those of us who have worked with Catholic high schools over the last 25 years, it was soon found that the St. Patrick's School accommodation was inadequate due to an ever growing enrolment. The Bishop of Hamilton, Bishop McNally, appealed to the Catholics of the city for funds to build a new school.

It was from this appeal that the money was generated to build the stone school building, Cathedral Boys' High School, that, to this day, stands as a landmark on Main Street East at Emerald Avenue. Construction of a replacement building began in 1994. The original Cathedral, on Main Street East, was opened in 1928 and by 1951 needed an addition. All of this was accomplished out of the charity of the clergy and lay people of Hamilton.

On the girls' side, a case could be made for the fact that the girls have had an advantage in Catholic secondary education in Hamilton from 1865 because of the wonderful work of the Sisters of Loretto and the Sisters of St. Joseph. In 1925, the old St. Vincent's School in the west end was renovated and it became a co-educational commercial school under the supervision of the St. Joseph's Sisters.

By 1928, the Lyceum School was overcrowded, and with the departure of the boys from the upper floor of St. Patrick's for the new Cathedral School, space was created for the transfer of the girls school to occupy the upper floors at St. Pat's. The Cathedral Girls' School continued to operate in that building until a new Cathedral Girls' was opened in 1955. As an aside, it should be noted that in between these two dates, the severe accommodation problems encountered by the Girls' School required that some classes be conducted in the St. Patrick's Club House which was on the north side of Main Street, near the school. During those years, the first satellite school, a phenomena which was to be repeated afterwards, was created at St. Ann's School where classes for girls in grade 9 and 10 were conducted, in 1947.

Some of the great people who led the Cathedral School over the years include: Sister Mount Carmel, Sister Celestine, Sister Marguerite, Sister Eucebia, Sister Sheila, Sister Marina and Sister Mary Ambrose.

+

Post-1945 era created new demands

The burgeoning growth of Hamilton's east end created greater demand for an extension of Catholic secondary school services. Bishop Ryan, who had led the campaign for the construction of the new Cathedral Girls' School, in 1955, now called on the people for their support in the building of a new Catholic high school on Queenston Road, near Parkdale Avenue. As in many times in the past, the Catholic people responded generously. Thus, in 1958, a new school bearing the name of one of Catholic education's great proponents, Bishop Ryan, was opened to serve the young people of east end Hamilton. Bishop Ryan Secondary School continues to be a reminder to the Catholic people of Hamilton, and of the province of Ontario, of the tremendous efforts over a long period of time, both within his diocese and throughout the province, by a Bishop who certainly deserves to be installed in a Catholic education hall of fame.

As a young priest, Bishop Ryan had experienced the frustration of the Catholic people in dealing with the famous Tiny Township case where, through legal means, the Catholic population of this province attempted to have restored to them the rights to provide full education which they believed they had at Confederation and which they believed they were guaranteed in Section 93 of the British North America Act. Unfortunately, having exhausted all appeals, the last appeal being to the Privy Council in London, they were informed on June 12, 1928, that the Government of Ontario had in fact the power to regulate and thus limit the provision of secondary education in Catholic schools. Interestingly, it was on June 12, 1984 that the Government of Ontario decided that it would no longer implement such regulations, and consequently extended to separate schools in Ontario a right for which they had fought for many years - completion of funding to the end of secondary school.

From the 1930's through the 40's, 50's and 60's, the voice of Bishop Ryan was always heard publicly and privately extolling the great value of Catholic schools and defending their rights. He vigorously participated in the campaign in the late 1960's when the Catholic people of the province appealed to the government to restore their right. That appeal, of course, was rejected and resulted in many school boards across the province becoming discouraged. Indeed, in many parts of the province, Catholic long established secondary schools closed their doors. However, the spirit that was alive in the Catholic people of Hamilton would not accept such defeat, and while others closed their Catholic high schools, Hamilton continued to open them.

First came St. Mary's in the renovated Basilica School. Father Fergus Duffy, the Loretto Sisters, and a band of teachers coming from Loretto, Cathedral Boys', Cathedral Girls' and Bishop Ryan brought Catholic secondary education to the west end of Hamilton. St. Mary's later moved to the former Ontario Teachers' Education College on the northwest corner of the McMaster University campus.

POST-1945 ERA CREATED NEW DEMANDS

-2

This was not the end. Shortly afterward, in 1974, St. Thomas More School was opened beside Sts. Peter and Paul School on the Mountain. The Catholic people responded with enthusiasm to these new schools. Both were full and had portable classrooms when they opened. They continued to burgeon until again the school trustees were required to provide another school on the east mountain. Thus, Brebeuf came into existence in 1974. Very soon afterwards, Brebeuf experienced the same phenomenon of full portable classrooms and the crying need for other space. While the Board was in the process of seeking approval for St. Jean de Brebeuf School, the Ministry of Education attempted to bring the public and separate school boards together in an effort to see if better use could be made of the surplus accommodation that existed at Southmount Secondary School. We were unable to reach an agreement and so proceeded with the building of the first Brebeuf School. Interestingly, it can now be noted that the solution proposed in those early days of 1970's became a fact in the late 1980's.

As the east end had in the 50's created the demand for the opening of Bishop Ryan School, so the great expansion of the 70's required that further accommodation be provided for the east end and Stoney Creek, and thus, Cardinal Newman High School came into existence, in 1976. It was situated, history buffs may note, on Cromwell Crescent. The school was divided by the boundary of Hamilton and Stoney Creek. While the office and main entrance were in Hamilton, the classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium and other facilities were in Stoney Creek.

The 1980's, and severe crowding in all of our secondary schools, was just a few years away. So, too, was a decade of major political decisions.

+

The 1980's: seeking a solution to crowded secondary schools

During the early 1980's, severe overcrowding was being experienced in all our secondary schools, while a steadily declining enrolment in the public secondary schools created a very significant surplus of space. The Board's appeal to the provincial government for further assistance in providing accommodation led the then Minister, Dr. Bette Stephenson, to request that the public school boards and the separate school board investigate the possibility of interchanging surplus accommodation. In early 1984, a committee representing the three boards met on many occasions with officials of the Ministry of Education, and though the sessions were amicable and the possibilities were evident, little came of the effort. The report was submitted to the Minister in May of 1984. On June 12, 1984, Premier William Davis made his historic announcement concerning the completion of funding for Catholic secondary schools. This initial announcement also created an agency to oversee co-operation and liaison between public and separate school boards with particular attention to be paid to the sharing of accommodation and the easing of any trauma which might affect staffing.

The new sections of The Education Act required that school boards set up liaison committees to examine, among other things, the possibilities of rationalizing surplus space. Many meetings were held with the Chairman of the Separate School Board, Father Kevin Sheridan, leading the separate school board delegations. Public school boards were interested in accommodating separate school students on the condition that both school boards would agree to share a common building. Our representatives believed that such an arrangement was unworkable.

Following the failure of these initiatives, the Separate School Board appealed to the Minister to take further steps to expedite measures to resolve the accommodation problem. The Minister appointed the retired Director of the Halton Board of Education, Mr. Emerson Lavender, as a fact finder. Mr. Lavender spent considerable time with the three representatives of the three boards and came to the conclusion that there was a significant surplus in the public secondary schools and that it should be shared. However, he also pointed out to the Minister that there was no political will to follow through with the transfer of some of that surplus accommodation. Mr. Lavender also recommended that the Minister appoint a mediator to further pursue the resolution of the problem.

The Minister appointed Mr. William Charlton, senior partner in a local law firm. Mr. Charlton had served as Chairman of one of the public school boards in the Metropolitan Toronto area. Mr. Charlton proceeded to meet with representatives of

THE 1980'S: SEEKING A SOLUTION TO CROWDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

-2-

the three boards, and after prolonged discussions, came to the conclusion that there was still not political will to resolve the sharing of surplus facilities in the community. He therefore recommended to the Minister that an arbitrator be appointed to deal with the situation. Mr. Charlton offered his own services for this purpose, but since the Hamilton Board of Education opposed his appointment, the Minister eventually appointed a Toronto lawyer, Stephen Goudge. This process also later involved another appointee, Kevin Burkett.

At a subsequent hearing, the Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board proposed the transfer of a number of public school facilities to its jurisdiction in order to resolve its needs for accommodation without the additional expenditure of public funds for the building of new schools. As many will remember, we had considerable controversy following that arbitration session which was held in public. Eventually, the arbitrated decision was that the following public schools be transferred to the Separate School Board: Southmount Secondary School, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School and Winona Secondary School. The arbitrator also recommended that sufficient funds be made available to the Board to provide for new schools to replace Cathedral and St. Thomas More. He also recommended that the former Ontario Teacher Education College, which had housed St. Mary's Secondary School for a number of years, be transferred to the ownership of the Separate School Board.

Following this decision, there was considerable opposition from the local public school establishment, and eventually, the Minister agreed to a second round of negotiations to be held in a hotel in Toronto. The aftermath of these negotiations was that instead of Churchill, the former Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School on Quigley Road would be transferred to the Separate School Board as a replacement for Bishop Ryan School; also that the Hamilton Board would also transfer two parcels of land -- one in the very east end of Hamilton and the other on the very west/southwest section of Hamilton Mountain -- to the ownership of the Separate School Board for the purposes of providing secondary school accommodation. The Ministry also agreed to fund the replacement of the Cathedral Schools and the St. Thomas More Secondary School.

Subsequent to this, a decision was made to transfer the St. Mary's School building to McMaster University, and as a result of this decision, the government agreed to fund the building of a new St. Mary's School. Some additional funds were also contributed as compensation of the transfer of the building and property at St. Mary's by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and by McMaster University.

Unfortunately, throughout all this, no practical solution was forthcoming for resolving what had been the most serious accommodation issue of time, i.e. of Cardinal Newman Secondary School in the east end of Hamilton and Stoney Creek.

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

10/12

THE 1980'S: SEEKING A SOLUTION FOR CROWDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

-3-

It will be seen, therefore, that over a period of approximately 22 years, the local Catholic school board built a number of secondary schools (St. Thomas More, St. Jean de Brebeuf and Cardinal Newman) while renovating St. Mary's twice to meet the explosive demand for Catholic secondary education. Unfortunately, at this time, construction had to be done within the very strict interpretation of government regulations which required that the Board be limited to the provisions available for senior elementary school. These provisions of course restricted the Board in providing secondary school accommodation in keeping with the prevailing practices in other publicly funded school systems in the province. Therefore, within that same 22 years, we commenced to re-build the secondary school system. This is an accomplishment which has not been matched anywhere else in the province.

As we look back at the story of Catholic secondary education in Hamilton-Wentworth, we must also acknowledge the work of many great people: lay people such as John Bennett and Patrick Sheridan; priests such as Father Mahony, Father Maloney, Monsignor Englert, Father O'Brien and others; Bishop Dowling needs to be recognized for his courage in initiating this trend in the first place, but special credit must also be given to the tremendous commitment and dedication of Bishop Ryan.

Bishop Ryan also constituted a private Board of Governors to administer the Catholic Secondary School in the post-war period. Many generous members of Catholic lay community have contributed to the work of that Board -- women and men like Mary K. Nolan, Bob O'Brien, Joe Flaherty, Ted Lech, John Morley, John Mallon, Jim Brennan and others contributed generously of their time, energy and emotions in working with the Bishop to maintain what had to be the private sector of Catholic secondary education (Grades 11, 12 and 13). Unfortunately, in a short history like this, one is limited in the litany of great and generous names which should be put before our public. Suffice it to say that, as in all other aspects of the enterprise of Catholic education, the tremendous solidarity of laity, teachers, clergy, bishops, religious and trustees made it possible for things to be accomplished which will surprise future generations.

The reputation of our secondary schools - academically, culturally, athletically and spiritually - is well-known across this country. Despite their meagre resources, they have provided parents with the opportunity to secure a Catholic secondary education for their children at very little personal expense. In many cases, children were educated to the end of secondary school without any cost to the parents. It is also true that, in some cases, students who had been educated without payment of fees later, in adulthood, saw fit to recompense the Catholic secondary schools for the tremendous expense which had been undertaken on their behalf by the Catholic community in general.

THE 1980'S: SEEKING A SOLUTION TO CROWDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

-4-

There is much in the old spirit which pervaded Catholic secondary schools of the past which must be retained. We live in times which demand even greater dedication to the Gospel on the part of all those who work in these schools and all those who graduate from these schools. We must be vigilant to ensure that the mission, the ethos, the climate and the socialization existing in these schools continues to promote vibrant individuals who will contribute not only to the community at large, but especially to the promotion of the Gospel and our Catholic heritage. We need to be committed to this objective, first because it is a good and an essential part of our mission, but also in memory of the heroic efforts that, over many years, made it possible for the mission of Catholic education to be fulfilled in our community.

+

French language education: a community effort

The end of World War Two represented a new beginning for both the world and the French language community in Hamilton. In September, 1945, French language schools began operating in Hamilton. Like most noble and important enterprises, the beginning was humble but spirited. The first school, Holy Angels (Ecole des Saints-Anges), was located on Sheaffe Street, on part of what would later become the downtown site of the Catholic Education Centre.

Enrollment at Holy Angels in 1945 was 27 students. By 1946, enrollment had nearly doubled, a tribute to the efforts of the many families in the French language community who initiated French language education. These efforts were led by Laurent Marcotte, Victor Rozon and Louvain Paquette.

The momentum of this development was sending positive ripples through the community and, in July, 1951, His Excellency, Bishop Joseph Francis Ryan, created the first parish to serve the French language community, St. Charles Garnier. Located just north of St. Joseph Hospital, its first pastor was Father Walter Murphy. He was assisted by Father C.H. Sylvestre. The blessing took place on July 29, 1951, with Bishop Ryan celebrating the first Mass.

The Church link with the French language community was further strengthened in 1952 with the arrival of les Soeurs de la Charité (the Sisters of Charity) from Ottawa. For the next 42 years, they played a significant role in the operation of French language schools in Hamilton. Their contributions to the success of French language education was recognized during special ceremonies in June, 1994, when with great sadness, we said goodbye to the sisters as they returned to Ottawa for new assignments.

The educational and community work begun by the sisters during the 1950's was complemented, in September, 1960, by the arrival of two Redemptorists priests, Father André Simard and Father Elzéar de l'Etoile, from Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec. Father Simard served as the new pastor of St. Charles. Community spirit continued to build and, in 1962, the French community parish, Notre-Dame-du-Perpétuel-Secours, was blessed. In 1962, French language students attending Holy Angels (Ecole des Saints Anges) moved into their new school, Ecole Notre Dame, on Cumberland Avenue in central Hamilton. The enrollment had climbed from 27 in 1945

FRENCH LANGUAGE EDUCATION - A COMMUNITY EFFORT

-2-

to 360 students by 1962. In 1980, Ecole Monseigneur-de-Laval was established on Hamilton Mountain with 165 students. They were housed in the open area of St. Vincent de Paul School on Columbia Drive. In 1984, Monseigneur-de-Laval, moved to Norwood Park School on Terrace Drive, as part of a lease arrangement with the Hamilton Board of Education. Yet another move was in store a few years later, in 1987, when the school moved to Sherwood School on the east Mountain. It had been a decade of change and growth and the recognition of this by the Separate School Board resulted in the decision to renovate the former St. Vincent de Paul school on Bendamere Avenue as the new home for Ecole Monseigneur-de-Laval. This move coincided with the move of the St. Vincent de Paul community to a new school on Greencedar Drive on the west Mountain.

Through the years the governance structure of French language schools evolved from advisory council to education council, to that of a largely autonomous French Language Section of the Board, as a result of Provincial Government Bill 75, which in 1987 allowed for the first election of three French language trustees to the Board. The first three French language trustees were Ryan Paquette, Johanne Dion and Pierre Garon. The Bill 75 legislation gave the French language trustees exclusive rights in areas such as the establishment and administration of French language schools.

Another important piece of Provincial legislation, in 1989, was Bill 8. It gave the French language community the right to be served in the French language by a wide range of Provincial Government offices and ministries.

At the local level, in 1994, the French Language Section and the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board agreed to pursue negotiations with the Hamilton Board of Education to transfer Ecole George P. Vanier to the Separate Board. The rationale for this decision was based on the fact that 95 per cent of the students at Vanier were Catholic.

As the 21st century approaches, French language education is clearly established and, indeed, continuing to grow as an educational and cultural entity serving the unique needs of the French language community in the Hamilton area.

+

L'enseignement en français... un effort collectif !

La fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale fut un nouveau départ pour l'ensemble du monde, mais également pour les francophones de Hamilton. En effet, c'est en septembre 1945 que les écoles de langue française ouvrirent leurs portes à Hamilton. Tout comme c'est le cas de toute entreprise noble et d'envergure, bien que les débuts n'eurent rien de grandiose, le cœur y était. Le premier établissement scolaire de langue française, l'École des Saints-Anges, était situé dans la rue Sheaffe, occupant en partie ce qui allait éventuellement devenir le Centre de l'éducation catholique du centre-ville.

En 1945, l'effectif scolaire de l'école des Saints-Anges était constitué de 27 élèves. Mais dès 1946, il avait presque doublé, ce qui témoigne des efforts de nombreuses familles qui, chez les francophones, sont à l'origine de l'enseignement en français. Messieurs Laurent Marcotte, Victor Rozon et Louvain Paquette furent à l'origine de cet effort collectif.

En juillet 1951, sous l'impulsion de ces premières initiatives qui eurent des répercussions positives au sein de la collectivité, Son Excellence Monseigneur Joseph Francis Ryan créa Saint-Charles Garnier, la première paroisse dont la vocation allait être de répondre aux besoins des fidèles francophones. Cette paroisse, située juste au nord de l'hôpital Saint-Joseph, eut le père Walter Murphy comme premier curé, celui-ci étant assisté par le père C.H. Sylvestre. La bénédiction eut lieu le 29 juillet 1951, et c'est Monseigneur Ryan lui-même qui y célébra la première messe en cette occasion.

En 1952, l'arrivée des Soeurs de la Charité en provenance d'Ottawa resserra encore plus les liens entre l'Église et les francophones. Cette communauté de soeurs allait jouer un rôle de premier plan au cours des 42 années qui suivirent, quant au fonctionnement des écoles de langue française de Hamilton. Voilà pourquoi leur participation au succès que connut l'enseignement en français fut soulignée lors d'une cérémonie spéciale tenue en juin 1994 alors que le cœur plein de tristesse, nous avons dû faire nos adieux aux Soeurs de la Charité avant qu'elles ne retournent à Ottawa pour y accepter d'autres charges.

Le travail communautaire et éducatif amorcé par les Soeurs de la Charité au cours des années 50 trouva son complément en 1960 dans l'arrivée de deux rédemptoristes venus de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré (Québec). Il s'agissait du père Elzéar de l'Étoile et du père Simard. Ce dernier fut le nouveau curé de Saint-Charles. L'esprit communautaire poursuivit ainsi sa croissance de sorte que, en 1962, une nouvelle paroisse de langue française fut bénie sous le nom de Notre-Dame-du-Perpétuel-Secours. En cette même année, les élèves francophones qui fréquentaient l'école des Saints-Anges occupèrent leurs nouveaux locaux de l'école Notre-Dame, située sur l'avenue Cumberland, au centre de Hamilton. De 27 qu'il était en 1945, l'effectif scolaire était passé à 360 élèves en 1962.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT EN FRANÇAIS... UN EFFORT COLLECTIF !

Monseigneur-de-Laval fut créée à la haute-ville en 1980, et comptait alors 165 élèves. Ceux-ci furent accueillis dans l'aire ouverte de l'école Saint-Vincent-de-Paul située sur Columbia. Puis, en 1984, les effectifs de Monseigneur-de-Laval, furent transférés à l'école Norwood Park située sur Norwood, conformément aux dispositions d'un bail conclu avec le Conseil de l'éducation de Hamilton. Cependant, un autre déménagement allait avoir lieu quelques années plus tard, en 1987, alors que les effectifs furent transférés à l'école Sherwood qui se trouvait dans le secteur est de la haute-ville. Cette décennie avait été marquée par de nombreux changements et une forte croissance, suite à quoi le Conseil séparé avait pris la décision de rénover l'ancienne école Saint-Vincent-de-Paul de l'avenue Bendamere pour accueillir les effectifs de Monseigneur-de-Laval. Ce déménagement coïncida avec celui des effectifs de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul qui allèrent occuper une nouvelle école située sur Greencedar, dans le secteur ouest de la haute-ville.

Au cours des ans, la structure administrative de nos écoles de langue française se modifia. Ainsi, le Conseil d'enseignement se transforma une Section de langue française largement autonome au sein du Conseil scolaire par suite du projet de loi 75 du gouvernement provincial qui, en 1986, prévoyait pour la première fois l'élection de trois conseillers scolaires francophones au sein du Conseil scolaire. Les trois premiers conseillers scolaires francophones furent Ryan Paquette, Johanne Dion et Pierre Garon. En vertu du Projet de loi 75, les conseillers scolaires francophones allaient disposer de droits exclusifs pour des questions telles que l'établissement et l'administration des écoles de langue française.

Le projet de loi 8 est une autre législation provinciale d'importance qui fut adoptée en 1989. Cette loi accorda aux régions désignées en fonction d'un nombre suffisant de francophones (y compris Hamilton) le droit d'être servies en français par de nombreux organismes et ministères du gouvernement provincial.

En 1994, sur le plan local, la Section de langue française et le Conseil catholiques des écoles séparées de Hamilton-Wentworth ont convenu d'entamer des négociations avec le Conseil de l'éducation de Hamilton en vue de faire passer l'école secondaire Georges P. Vanier sous la tutelle du Conseil séparé. Cette décision s'appuie sur le fait que 95 pour cent des élèves de Vanier sont catholiques.

Au seuil du 21^e siècle, l'enseignement en français possède de fortes assises et continue même de croître en tant qu'entité éducative et culturelle au service des besoins particuliers des francophones de la région de Hamilton.

A Summing Up...

In the previous chapters, we have followed the story of our people's efforts to provide for the Catholic education of their families. It has been a difficult struggle. We have surmounted many obstacles and coped with rejection, bigotry, deprivation and internal conflict, but, as we now see, we have emerged from it with the means of providing tremendous opportunities for our young people and for the future of our community.

What should we learn from this odyssey of educational history? Well, for one thing, it is evident that we have very deep roots as an educating people. We are a teaching people with a structure for maintaining the orthodoxy of our faith, our message and our traditions. Our schools must reflect this great heritage, they must be aware of our traditions, our story, and our identity. They must be true to the trust our people and our parents place in them. They must be truly good at the things schools are expected to do. Through the processes of socialization, community learning, teaching and celebration, they must instill a love for the faith, an acceptance of Jesus as brother and Lord, a commitment to living the Gospel and to bringing its message into their lives and into the lives of those in the overlapping community to which they belong.

What does all this mean to the Catholic family here in Hamilton-Wentworth? It requires that we make the best use of this precious talent, this pearl that fate and faith have put at our disposal. Our whole community must recognize its ownership of, and its role in, our schools. The separate school supporters, the parents, the teachers, the students, the administrators, the trustees, the clergy, the religious and the bishops of this community must recognize their obligation to preserve this gift and to share unselfishly in keeping, developing, guiding and caring for it. This institution is one of the best means we have of providing for the general and religious education of our present and future family members in this region.

Likewise, our schools can play an important role in being a light to the world. We must continually be thankful for this unique system we have which is not available to most of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. This system and its broad mission represents the largest involvement of our Catholic people and the greatest investment by our people, in this diocese and for that matter in all the other dioceses, of Ontario.

It is most important that Catholic trustees retain the power to staff our schools and administration with the people who will preserve the character of our schools and ensure the fulfilment of their mission. Likewise, it is important for us in the general community to have the courage to put forward the best among us for the positions of school trustees and, having done so, to support them in their role.

A SUMMING UP

-2-

You may ask, 'How do we help in preserving this great gift of our Catholic schools and of ensuring their faithfulness?' All of us must look for opportunities to encourage our schools and those who work within them and with them to strive for perfection in their lives and in their work. We must have the commitment to support our schools and the boards which administer them in all practical ways, politically, financially, socially, privately. We must continue to insist that our schools truly reflect our Catholic Christian values, traditions and character. We must strive to exercise a positive influence internally in our Catholic community and externally in the community at large for the good of, and for the defence of, our schools by explaining our schools' rights and mission. We must continue to insist on the retention of the uniqueness of our schools and on the control of our schools remaining in the hands of our Catholic people.

It is also important to encourage good practising members of our Catholic community to take an active role in maintaining and developing our schools as employees, teachers, administrators and trustees. Finally, we must pray that all with responsibilities in Catholic education will continue to have the courage, skill and commitment to unselfishly promote its very special historic mission.

If we have high expectation for our schools they, ultimately, will live up to these expectations.

+

Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board - History at a Glance (Elementary Schools)

*** indicates the year in which the original school was built.**

1847 - * St. Augustine School in Dundas opened.

1852 - Three Sisters of St. Joseph arrive in Hamilton, begin to provide Catholic Education to immigrant children.

1855 - Hamilton Separate School Board established.

1856 - * St. Mary's (Elementary) School established on Park Street North.

1856 - * St. Patrick opened at Hunter Street and Ferguson Avenue.

1860 - * St. Vincent School, Pearl Street (later became Cathedral Commercial School for Girls).

1864 - * St. Lawrence, Ferrie Street.

1882 - St. Mary's Girls' (formerly Sacred Heart School)

1889 - St. Thomas School (later to be renamed St. Brigid. See 1959).

1890 - St. Mary's Boys' on Mulberry Street, between Park Street and Bay Street.

- NOTE: All of the schools listed for St. Mary's (Elementary) followed the original classrooms on Park Street, later the Chapel of St. Mary's and the three rooms on the second floor; also an old house at MacNab and Mulberry Streets (two rooms), 1927.

1890 - Holy Angels, building serving as Bishop's residence converted into school.

**Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic
Separate School Board - History at a Glance.**

- 2 -

1908 * - St. Ann's, Barton Street East and Sherman Avenue, Hamilton (4 rooms, later rebuilt).

1912 - St. Patrick's on Main Street East and East Avenue, replacing the one on Hunter Street.

- St. Thomas Aquinas, Hunt Street.

- Lyceum School, Sheaffe Street, behind St. Mary's Church Rectory.

1913 - New St. Ann's Elementary School built at Barton Street East and Sherman Avenue, Hamilton.

1915 - Sacred Heart, Hamilton Avenue on Hamilton Mountain (later replaced, in 1924, with subsequent additions in 1945, 1950, 1960, 1967)

1920 - Holy Family, Kenilworth Avenue and Britannia Avenue, replacing temporary school built in 1917. School rebuilt in 1945 with additions in 1958, 1960, 1965. (see also 1945 entry).

- St. Lawrence, John and Ferrie Streets, replacing original built in 1864

1922 - * Holy Rosary, Gage Avenue and Whitfield.

1924* - St. Joseph, Locke and Herkimer Streets, replacing original school known as St. Charles.

- Sacred Heart, replacement building (see 1915).

1929 - St. John, King Street East and Edgemont Avenue.

1930* - Canadian Martyrs', Main Street West and Emerson Street.

- * St. Emeric, Brant Street and Niagara Street.

- * St. Augustine, Mulberry Street, next to St. Mary's; later demolished and incorporated with the new St. Mary's built in 1959.

1933 - St. Thomas Aquinas, Hunt Street, rebuilt and name changed to Christ the King School.

**Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic
Separate School Board - History at a Glance**

-3-

1945 - Holy Family School rebuilt.(See 1920).

1947 - * St. Francis Xavier, Fruitland (Stoney Creek).

1948 - * Sts. Peter and Paul, 49 Fennell Avenue East, Hamilton Mountain.

1949 - St. John, addition.

1950* - * St. Thomas, Waterdown.

1950/ 51 * - Addition at Sacred Heart. (See 1915).

- Addition at St. Patrick.

- Addition to Sts. Peter and Paul School.

- * St. Eugene, 120 Parkdale Avenue, Hamilton.

1953 - Addition to St. Joseph.

- * Blessed Sacrament, East 37th Street and Fennell Avenue East, Hamilton Mountain.

- * St. Helen School, Britannia Avenue and MacLaren (replacing former temporary school built of Quonset Huts in 1943).

- * Immaculate Heart of Mary, Winona (Stoney Creek); additions in 1960, 1963, 1968.

1955 - Addition to St. John's.

1956 - Additions to Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, St. Ann's, Sts. Peter and Paul and Basilica (Christ the King).

1957 - Additions to St. Ann's, St. Eugene's, St. Lawrence's.

- * St. Margaret Mary, 25 Brentwood Drive on east-central Hamilton Mountain.

**Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic
Separate School Board - History at a Glance**

-4-

1957/ 58 - * Our Lady of Lourdes, 420 Mohawk Road East, Hamilton.

- Additions to St. Patrick's, St. John's, St. Helen's, St. Joseph's, St. Margaret Mary, St. Emeric, Holy Family and Blessed Sacrament.

1959 - * Regina Mundi, 675 Mohawk Road West and Upper Paradise Road on the west Mountain.

- St. Brigid, 24 Smith Avenue in central Hamilton, replacing former St. Thomas School built in 1889).

- New St. Mary's School at MacNab and Colborne Streets.

- Additions to Our Lady of Lourdes and Blessed Sacrament.

1960 - St. Augustine, Dundas, addition.

- * St. Vincent de Paul, Columbia Drive, Hamilton Mountain.

- Additions to Holy Family, St. Emeric's, St. Eugene's, Sacred Heart and Sts. Peter and Paul.

1961 - Addition to St. Ann's, Hamilton (See 1908).

1962 - * Notre Dame, Cumberland Avenue in central Hamilton (French language School, replacing Holy Angels, which was situated on the same Mulberry Street property as former St. Mary's, early in the early 1900's).

- * Our Lady of the Assumption, Elfrida (Stoney Creek)

1964 - * Holy Name of Jesus, 181 Belmont Avenue, east Hamilton.

1965 - * Corpus Christi, 25 Alderson Drive, Hamilton Mountain.

- * St. Charles, Young and Hughson Streets, downtown Hamilton.

- * Holy Spirit, 115 Barnesdale Avenue North (built by Holy Spirit Parish but operated by the Board).

**Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic
Separate School Board -
History at a Glance**

-5-

1965 (continued) - Additions to St. Helen's, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Vincent de Paul and Notre Dame, Holy Family, St. Brigid, St. Joseph.

- * St. Bernard, Nash Road, east Hamilton.**
- * Holy Rosary School, Gage Avenue and Whitfield Avenue.**
- * Holy Name of Jesus, Belmont Avenue.**

1966 - * St. Michael's, Hester Street and Upper Wellington, Hamilton Mountain.

- * St. Christopher's, Greenhill Avenue, southeast Hamilton.**
- Addition to Holy Name of Jesus.**
- * St. Martin of Tours, Stoney Creek.**

1967 - New St. Lawrence School, 88 Macauley Street East, Hamilton.

- Additions to Sacred Heart, St. Brigid's, St. Emeric's and St. John's.**

1968 - * St. Daniel, 75 Anson Drive, Hamilton.

- * St. Ann's Junior School, Barton Street East and Sherman Avenue, Hamilton.**

1969 - St. Augustine, Dundas, addition.

- * St. David, 95 Owen Place, east Hamilton.**
- * Christ the King (new building. See 1933).**

1971 - * St. Columba, Main Street East and Sherman Avenue, Hamilton.

1973 - Addition to St. Patrick's.

- * St. Anthony of Padua, 12 Ambrose Drive, east Hamilton.**
- * St. Catherine of Siena, 20 Gemini Drive, Hamilton west Mountain.**

1975 - * St. Joan of Arc, 60 Barlake Avenue, east Hamilton.

.../ 6

**Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic
Separate School Board -
History at a Glance**

- 6 -

1975 Continued..

- * St. Cecilia, 50 Lawson Street, Hamilton Mountain.**
- * St. James the Apostle, 129 John Murray Street, Stoney Creek Mountain.**
- * St. Luke's, 345 Albright Road, east Hamilton.**
- * St. Teresa of Avila, 171 San Remo Drive, Hamilton west Mountain.**

1978 - * St. Agnes, 80 Colcrest Street, east Hamilton.

- * Blessed Kateri, 22 Queensbury Drive, Hamilton Mountain.**

1980 - * Monseigneur-de-Laval. First location in space leased from Hamilton Board of Education at Norwood Park Public School; moved into St. Vincent de Paul School on Columbia Drive and shared building until St. Vincent de Paul moved to new building in 1989. (See 'Resilient Roots' chapter, ' French Language Education: A Community Effort.')

1982 - * St. Clare of Assisi, 185 Glenashton Drive, Stoney Creek.

- * St. Paul, 24 Amberwood Street, Stoney Creek Mountain.**

1987 - * Our Lady of Peace, 252 Dewitt Road, Stoney Creek.

1989 - * St. Joachim, 75 Concerto Court, Ancaster.

- * St. Vincent de Paul, 295 Green Cedar Drive, Hamilton west Mountain.**

1993 - * Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Flamborough (Carlisle).

1994 - * St. Marguerite d'Youville, 20 Bonaparte Way, Hamilton Mountain.

(PLEASE NOTE: Every effort has been made to provide an accurate list through the search of Board documents and records, where available. Variances were found in the listings for particular buildings because some records listed the start of construction, other records listed the actual opening date of a building and still others failed to make such distinctions.)

Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic

Separate School Board

- History at a Glance (Secondary Schools)

1865 - Loretto Sisters arrive from Guelph, at request of Bishop Farrell, establish Loretto Academy, a school providing education from elementary through senior secondary school.

1871 - Hamilton Separate School Board, with support of Bishop Crinnon, opened the new Model School, later to be known as Sacred Heart and, subsequently, St. Mary's Girls' School. Served as the core of secondary school system which provided education to girls and boys into the early part of the 20th century.

1912 - The Cathedral School opened, later became known as St. Mary's Lyceum. (see ' Resilient Roots' by Patrick J. Brennan, chapter titled 'Catholic Secondary Education: A Tale of Determination').

1928 - * Cathedral Boys' High School, Main Street East and Emerald Avenue.

1955 - * Cathedral Girls' High School, Main Street East near Wentworth St.

1959 - * Bishop Ryan Secondary School, Queenston Road near Parkdale Avenue. Moved, in 1993, to new site on Albright Road.

1970 - St. Mary's High School started at site of former Loretto Academy, King Street West and Pearl Street, west Hamilton. Moved in 1970 to former Christ the King School on Hunt Street, then to former Ontario Teachers' Education College at Main Street West and Cootes Drive from 1980 to 1994, when new school building was opened at Rifle Range Road and Whitney Avenue in west Hamilton.

1972 - * St. Thomas More Secondary School opened at East 5th Street and Brucedale Avenue. Moved, 1991, to new building at 1045 Upper Paradise Road, near Rymal Rd.

1974 - * St. Jean de Breb uf Secondary School, Lisgar Court, Hamilton east Mountain. Moved in 1988 to Acadia Drive building, on east central Mountain, formerly occupied by Southmount Secondary School.

1976 - * Cardinal Newman Secondary School, Cromwell Crescent, Hamilton / Stoney Creek. (See ' Resilient Roots' by Patrick J. Brennan, chapter titled ' Post-1945 era Created New Demands', page 2).

1988 - Cardinal Newman Secondary School east campus established at former Winona Secondary School, Lewis Road and Barton Street East, Winona.

**HAMILTON-WENTWORTH ROMAN CATHOLIC
SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD
- HISTORY AT A GLANCE (SECONDARY SCHOOLS)**

-2-

NOTE: From time to time, secondary schools shared space with elementary schools as part of transitional periods or times of crowding, e.g., there was a Bishop Ryan Secondary School satellite community located at St. Francis Xavier Elementary School in Stoney Creek in the early 1970's; also, St. Jean de Breb  uf students attended classes, in the early 1970's, at Blessed Sacrament School; some Cathedral High School(s) grade 9 students attended an annex at St. Mary's Elementary School in the early 1960s.

F O C U S

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH SEPARATE SCHOOLS

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

SPRING 1969

7 BOARDS IN ONE, FORTY SCHOOLS

Forty schools are under the jurisdiction of the new Wentworth County Roman Catholic School Board. Four more in Hamilton are in various stages of construction and planning (St. Daniel's, St. David's, St. Jerome's and St. Pius). The Cathedral of Christ the King School is presently being replaced. The six county boards and their schools with which Hamilton joined

are as follows:

Ancaster: St. Ann's and Father Loftus Schools

Dundas: St. Augustine's and St. Bernadette's

Elfrida: Our Lady of the Assumption

Stoney Creek: St. Francis Xavier and

St. Martin's

Waterdown: St. Thomas

Winona: Immaculate Heart of Mary

For purposes of brevity and easier identification throughout the province, the new Board will be referred to, informally, as the Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL, DUNDAS, FIRST IN DIOCESE

The first school in the Hamilton Diocese, St. Augustine's, opened in Dundas in 1847 with 105 children.



First school, on Sydenham St., 1847; now Church rectory.

It would seem that the potato famine in Ireland had its influence on the "Valley City". Old educational records abound with names such as



Frame School, built 1869, on Alma St.

Casey, O'Connor, Doherty, Case, Hourigan, Enright, etc.

In 1869 a new frame school on Alma Street was erected and the original school on Sydenham Street became St. Augustine's Church rectory, as it is to this day. The frame school was partly destroyed by fire in 1902 and was replaced by a brick structure. In 1931 the present red brick building was built, largely through the efforts and financial backing of the Pastor, the late Monsignor Gehl, and the School Board Chairman at that time, the late James Grightmire.

(Continued on page 4)



Dundas Separate School Board, 1896—Top Row, Left to Right: I. Sheppard, P. O'Connor, R. J. Burke, M. T. Sullivan. Front Row: P. Williams, S. Smith, J. Burke.



Present school on Alma Street, showing school built in 1931, (left) with additions in 1950, 1952 and 1960.

Continuing **FOCUS**

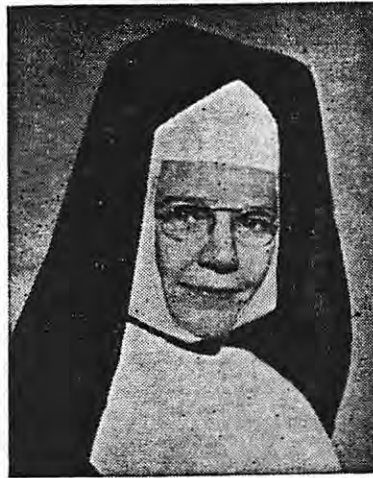
The new Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board has voted to continue the publication of Focus which was the communications organ of the former Hamilton Separate School Board. The new Board has also given approval to more frequent issuance of the paper, when this becomes feasible.

Since the former Focus readers have gained some familiarity with the Hamilton school picture, the editors felt it would be appropriate to give special coverage, in the next few issues, to the county schools under the new Board's jurisdiction. St. Augustine's in Dundas being one of the oldest seats of learning in the Diocese, has been chosen as the first in this series.

As previously, the editors of Focus hope that these bulletins will stimulate parental interest and discussion and they welcome any questions or suggestions regarding the contents of future issues.

K. C. NOLAN,
Editor.

IN MEMORIAM



Many parents will join with the Trustees and Staff of the Wentworth County Roman Catholic Separate School Board to pay tribute to the memory of Sister M. Sheila of the Sisters of St. Joseph. After an extended illness Sister Sheila died on March 21, 1969, in her 38th year of Religious Life.

Sister was extremely well known in Hamilton for her thirty-two years of outstanding service in Cathedral Girls' High School from 1933 to 1965. She came to the Hamilton Separate School Board in 1966 as Director of Religious Education and continued her dedicated work in this field until her death.

Sister Sheila will be a great loss to her community and the diocese. We will remember her work in Christian education.

BUDGET PROBLEMS

Faced with the additional costs of initially organizing the larger units of administration, most of the new county boards, both public and separate, have made representation to the Department of Education for increased government grants. After reviewing their budgets these boards discovered that the revised provincial grant regulations issued in March had shifted a disproportionate load of the financial burden to the local taxpayer.

As Focus goes to press, Mr. Davis has just announced that grant adjustments will be made. Board officials are awaiting a copy of the revised regulations to see what effect they will have on the budget.

MISS DORIS MORRIS

The Trustees and Staff of the Wentworth County Roman Catholic Separate School Board were shocked and saddened by the sudden death on December 14, 1968, of Miss Doris Morris, who was well known to Board personnel for her conscientious and dedicated work in the Payroll Department since May of 1961.

Vice-President of the Catholic Women's League of The Cathedral of Christ the King Parish at the time of her death, Miss Morris was also very active in many charitable causes with a particular devotion for assisting the Missions.

She will long be remembered by her fellow workers for her keen sense of humour and her many acts of kindness.

THE HAMILTON-WENTWORTH SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD



Left to right: J. J. Walker, North Wentworth; L. L. Dolecki, Ward 4; Rev. J. M. Sherlock, Ward 2; Rev. C. L. McColgan and Mrs. T. B. Radigan, Ward 3; Mrs. E. P. Nolan and R. W. Savelli, Ward 1; R. M. Paquette, Ward 4; Chairman, Dr. N. A. Mancini, Ward 5; Vice-Chairman, Rev. J. B. Cox and T. J. Bonney, Ward 6; Rev. J. J. Jordan, Ward 8; A. B. Samson, Jr. and Rev. K. D. Kennedy, Ward 7; P. Wilson, Ward 8; M. Cusick, South Wentworth; foreground, P. J. Brennan, Superintendent of Education.



THE WORKS OF PICASSO?

No. These masterpieces were designed and executed by Primary Grades and were part of an excellent two-room display by our Separate School children, shown at the Hamilton Art Gallery in April.



Also at the Art Gallery the works of Junior and Intermediate Grades.

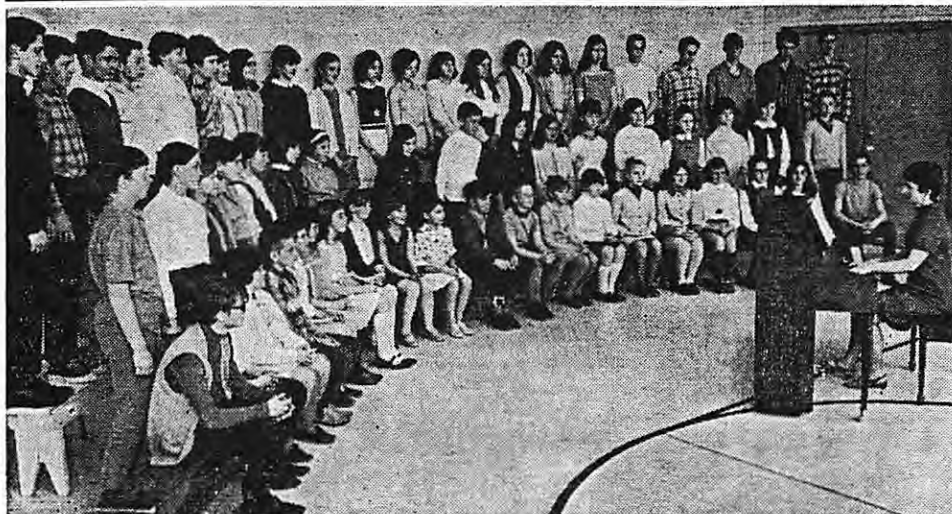


An experimental program in kindergarten and first year music is being conducted by Mrs. Naidus (Music Consultant) in nine of our elementary schools. The material is based on the "Kodaly System". This system is flourishing in Hungary as well as in other parts of Europe and is now widely accepted in the United States and Canada. The children, with the aid of charts, learn to recognize, feel and move to the beat and rhythmic pattern of the music. Reading from staff notation, boys and girls can, by the end of the first year sing songs that contain the five notes of the pentatonic scale. The "Threshold to Music Program" is a development system from K to 8.

KINDERGARTEN ADMISSION

Most educationalists believe that children should be admitted to school on a basis of readiness rather than of chronological age.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board will take a step in this direction in January 1970, by initiating a pilot project for continuous Kindergarten admission. In the schools chosen for this programme, children will be admitted, in September, according to present Board policy (five years old before January 1). From January to June a child will be admitted on his or her birthday.



Mrs. Gerald Louch prepares a choral group from Our Lady of Lourdes School for the unique honour of singing at the annual banquet of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association in the Royal York, Toronto, on April 22.

ANOTHER "BIG ROOM" TAKES SHAPE



Steel girders converging on a central core seem to symbolize the unity of purpose and strength of programming in the new St. Daniel's under construction on Anson Ave.

Construction is proceeding apace on the new "Big Room" St. Daniel's School on Anson Avenue. It will service the Lisgar-Barriefield areas South of Mohawk and East and West of Upper Ottawa. The Lisgar area will have a total of 2,000 living units, an estimated population of 5000 people. The trunk sewer on Upper Kenilworth is now ready to service the development of this rapidly growing area.

The pressure on St. Margaret Mary School, which presently has three portables, will also be relieved by this new project.

St. Daniel's is an open-area or BIG ROOM concept school providing ten pie-shaped teaching areas arranged in a circle about a core library and audio-visual resource centre. Two kindergarten classrooms, an administration wing and a large gymnasium complete the first phase of this exciting new school.

A typical day in such an open-area or BIG ROOM school might look like this.

The primary, junior and intermediate groups gather around the centre for opening exercises. The children then return to their ten home stations for marking attendance. Suppose the first subject is Communications or Language Arts. Most children will stay with their home group but a few will move easily across the room to join another group. The ten main groups will work separately — perhaps one group will do choral speaking, another will do creative writing, prepare a book report, etc.

The next subject may be Social Sciences. Again the children will re-group. This time there may be four groups according to ability. A smaller group may receive special enrichment projects to develop on their own research under the guidance of a teacher. A larger group of 100 pupils may have three or four teachers acting as a team to develop a geography lesson. Another small group of 12 slower learners may be receiving individual help from a teacher.

Other areas of study are handled in a similar way.

The BIG ROOM offers a better approach to enabling students to proceed through school at a pace commensurate with their ability and work habits. If a pupil has advanced to a point where he is ready in mid-term for a higher instruction level in a particular area of study, he simply moves to another cluster of pupils a few feet away. He does not have to transfer to a new and unfamiliar teacher.

Mr. J. S. Kaposy (Principal) and Miss Carol Roth (primary level teacher) have been planning and preparing for ten months to ensure the successful organization of this open-area, pupil oriented school.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S

(Continued from page 1)

Two rooms were added to the school in 1950 and four more in 1952. To meet the growth in the southern part of the town, St. Bernadette's School on Governor's Road was erected in 1958. In 1960 St. Augustine's was further enlarged by the addition of six classrooms, gymnasium, principal's office and teachers' dining rooms.

To-day 520 students are enrolled at St. Augustine's and 136 at St. Bernadette's. Another addition is planned for St. Augustine's and with the rapid expansion in the whole area the new Board is giving careful study to the need for future expansion.

From the beginning, the Sisters of St. Joseph and many dedicated lay teachers have laboured in this vineyard of education. The present Principal, Sister Francis, says that no account of St. Augustine's, however sketchy, would be complete without a mention of Sister Marcella (Hogan) who was principal from 1944 until her death in 1963. She was an outstanding teacher loved and respected by students and parents alike and particularly remembered as a wise and kindly counsellor to children in difficulties.

Many other self-sacrificing indomitable people have played important roles in the shaping of Catholic Education in Dundas. There have been the clergy, from the first pastor, Reverend John O'Reilly (1843-1885) to the present pastor, Right Reverend F. P. Kehoe, as well as the members of the school board during those one hundred and twenty-two years. Of the latter, one of the earliest notables was T. A. Wardell. Another more recent one is Mr. Frank Maloney, who was a board member for over thirty years. Just prior to the amalgamation with Wentworth County in January, the Dundas Separate School Board consisted of: Alan Dilworth, Chairman; John J. Walker, former chairman from 1953 to 1967; John Picone, Robert Lawrence, Gerard Nixon, Mrs. Eleanor Hall, Richard Fiorvanti and Richard Habinski. For fifteen years Bernard Clancy had been board secretary. Mr. Walker was elected to the new County Board as a representative of North Wentworth.

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools

Fast Facts

- Traces origin to first Catholic school in Dundas, St. Augustine, 1847.
- Hamilton Separate Schools founded in early 1850's by Sisters of St. Joseph, at the request of Toronto Bishop Armand de Charbonnel (the Hamilton Roman Catholic Diocese was established in 1856).
- First three Hamilton Separate Schools : St. Mary, St. Patrick, St. Lawrence - all in downtown area.
- Board incorporated into its present regional structure in 1969, encompassing all Catholic schools serving the City of Hamilton and Wentworth County municipalities of Ancaster, Dundas, Stoney Creek, Flamborough, Glanbrook.
- Currently (1994-95) operates 54 elementary schools and six secondary schools.
- Enrollment: approximately 18,700 elementary students, 8,100 secondary students.
- Governed locally by 21-member elected Board of Trustees, including 18 English language trustees and three trustees comprising the French Language Section. Effective with November, 1994 election, there will be 17 English language trustees.

- end -

Bibliography

Hodgins, J. George, Historical and Other Papers and Documents Vol. 1 to 5, L. K> Cameron, King's Printer, Toronto 1911.

Walker, Franklin A., Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada, The Federation of Catholic Education Associations of Ontario, 1955, 1976.

Walker, Franklin A., Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario, The Federation of Catholic Education Associations of Ontario, 1976.

Burns, J.A., Kohlbrenner Bernard J., A History of Catholic Education in the United States, Benziger Brothers, New York 1937.

Lenore Mother Mary S.P., The Contributions of Roman Catholic Teaching Communities to Education in Canada, O,E.C.T.A. 1959.

Campbell, Marjorie Freeman, A Mountain and a City, McClelland & Stewart Ltd., Toronto 1966.

Diocese of Hamilton, Archives, King Street West, Hamilton.

Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, Archives.

Hamilton-Wentworth R.C. Separate School Board, Minutes.

Gonzalez, Justo L., The Story of Christianity Vol. 1, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1984.

Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario 1950, (The Hope Commission Report), Baptist Johnston, King's Printer, Toronto, 1950.

Donovan, Fr. Patrick J., 50th Anniversary Booklet of St. Patrick's Parish, 1927.

Phillips, C.E. The Development of Education in Canada, W.J. Gage & Co. Ltd., Toronto, 1957.

A Documentary History of Separate Schools in Ontario, Parts 1, II & III, O.E.C.T.A., Toronto, 1974.