

## **From November 2013 Beacon**

### **Four local schools heralded new philosophy of education**

*With files from Allan Anderson*

Brigden Public School and Mooretown-Courtright Public School are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. Other schools of this era include the former East Sombra School which was opened in 1963 and closed in 1999, and Riverview School, opened in 1964. When newly-built, these structures and the new philosophy of education that accompanied them replaced the one, two, and three-room schools that were dotted across the township. The concept of small community schools had been the core of public education since pioneer times.

The former Sombra Township was the first to have a public-supported school. One is believed to have been erected in 1830 on Lot One of Concession 9 and James Henderson was the first teacher there. In the former Moore Township, Thomas Sutherland build the first school in 1835 in Sutherland's Landing between Mooretown and Courtright. It was a two-storey building measuring seven metres by nine metres, with the school on the first floor and the Commissioner's Court on the second. John Pullman was the teacher there.

Captain William Wright, a retired British naval officer, settled with a land grant in the former Moore Township in a home he called Oaklands. He brought his wife and seven daughters with him to Upper Canada, but his wife died of cholera along the way to Corunna. Captain Wright brought a governess, Miss Clark, over from England to look after the children. She ended up teaching the children of several neighbours, who were also British naval officers, in addition to the Wright family.

In this way, Captain Wright was able to offset the cost of employing a governess. Since he and his neighbours were thought of as local aristocracy, the girls' education was no doubt focused on becoming a proper English lady.