



# Brant Argyle School (#1703)

## INFO

Rev. Dec. 17, 2013

### Construction:

- **John Morrison** - was the contractor for the first half of the school when it was built in 1914. His family lived in the Jimmy Douglas Hall during construction and would cook for the construction crew and builders at the hall. \$9,000 was required to build the school, purchase the land and furnish the building.

- The school was officially opened on October 5, 1914 by school inspector Best. The entry in the Stonewall Argus stated:

*"Inspector Best opened the Brant-Argyle Consolidated School on Monday morning (5<sup>th</sup>). The building is not entirely completed but is finished on the inside. Mr. Cockbill, a graduate of London University has been secured as Principal, and Miss Grace Patterson, who has been teaching in the old school, will act as assistant. Four new vans are in use in bringing the pupils to the schools."*

- **Jimmy Strong** – was the contractor for the second half of the school in 1929. \$12,000 was required to extend the school with one more classroom and the lower level for a community hall. Anne Strong remembers helping her father, Jim, with her brothers to clean the bricks that had been removed from the east side of the original wing of the school. She recalls getting one cent a brick doing so, and earned enough money to buy her first bicycle.
- George Hough was paid \$30.00 to haul gravel to make the steps (most likely the concrete mix inside) in 1929.
- In 1923 there were too many students at the school for the two rooms, they used the Jimmy Douglas Hall (AKA Hanson Hall – it was owned by Mr. Hanson during this time, sold in 1924) as overflow. Students were taught at the hall by Anne Osborne (nee Taylor), the students would go over to Brant Argyle School grounds for recess. There were 100 plus students after the 1929 addition, it was obviously needed.
- The school vans were horse drawn, and at first had no source of heat. Charlie Delaroque Sr. was the first to put a stove into the vans, even though there was a big concern for the children being burnt as the van bounced and bumped along. Buffalo

robes and blankets were used to keep warm, there were even a few foot warmers used.

- In 1929 the addition to the school saw the lower East classroom used as a community gathering place by the Social Club for dances, the JD Douglas Hall was renovated the same year (or in 1935?) and made smaller, now used as a post office. A house was also made from materials of the former JD Douglas Hall when it was made smaller. Jack Warburton remembers starting school in 1922, at the Hanson Hall “in a fairly large room west of the railway tracks, which was later used as the post office run by Tom Henry. That room was equipped with double desks and I was seated alongside John Swinton. The next year we were in what was referred to as the furnace room in the main school.”
- **Ellis Edward Stewart** – a teacher at the Brant Argyle School died in 1935, and his girlfriend Vesta Sampson bought **spruce trees** from Indian Head, Saskatchewan to be planted in his memory. When he was alive, he always said there should be trees around the school yard. Fred (Alf?) Amy was in charge of planting, and members from the school board & some students from the school each had a section to plant. Mr. E.E Stewart was originally from Holland, Manitoba; Brant Argyle was his first school to teach at.
- **Teacherage** in town – Mr. Leech was the first teacher to live there in 1944 on land purchased from Mr. Arthur Lobb.

#### **School Vans & Transportation:**

- “During the Dirty Thirties, there was keen competition in tendering on a school van route. There were six routes serving the Brant-Argyle School. Dad tendered for the route from Fishers to the school for \$1.70 a day. It meant that there was some cash in the home...” – Jack Warburton
- *“Traveling to and from school in the horse pulled school van was quite the adventure at times. A few times the driver had a runaway. We thought it was great fun but i’m sure the poor driver was sweating buckets. On warmer days we could roll up the canvass sides of the van and wee able to see the outside world. In the winter the van was equipped with a little wood heater. If you sat next to the stove you roasted and if you were next to the door you froze so we would keep trading places with each other to try and keep comfortable. I haven’t forgotten those cold Manitoba winters. Many times I would come home from school with frozen fingers. We had to walk half a mile after getting off the van.” Dolly Hoffman*
- “Edgar and Roy Peacock were our school van drivers. We called their old “bus” the “dog catcher” because it looked similar. It had a Model T truck front, spindly wooden spoke wheels, and a rectangular enclosed box, that we rode in. In the winter, they had the horses, pulling the regular winter school van, on sleighs. On the way home,

they would treat us to toast and honey. We made toast on the little van stove, and they had honey from their own hives at home." – Marvel Rothwell (Lawrence)

- "Jim Ritchie and George Willox had snappy teams and with the co-operation of the students there would be a race every night to see which one left the school yard and got to Penny's corner first. Once the school board members got word of this, they put a stop to the racing. Though it was too dangerous for the young students. The children thought it was great fun." – Marvel Rothwell (Lawrence)
- 1946-47 – Denis Grandmont began school at Brant-Argyle. The horse drawn van took quite a while to get him to and from school. He left home at 7 am and arrived back in the evening at 6pm, sometimes falling asleep on the way.
- Once, in a bad thunderstorm, the school barn was hit by lightning and killing Murdock McCuish's team of black horses. The other horses nearby were untouched. (c. mid 1940s)
- In the late 1950s the school sleighs ended up on top of the school barn as a Halloween prank. One other year, the next morning, the school was filled with live chickens.
- One of the main reasons for families deciding on moving to the Argyle area was the fact that it was a consolidated school district with school vans.
- Jessie Parsonage taught grade 5-8 from 1943-1947. Once when the spring roads were flooded the teachers were unable to get to school. It was decided by the school board that the teachers should ride in the horse drawn vans which went past the Snyder's residence, where Jessie was residing. Edgar/Roy Peacock drove the van taking them into town, where they stayed with Jim Strong for a few days until the water receded.
- Bill Ritchie remembers going to school, driven by John Dodd, when Helen Pless would start singing Christmas carols and soon everyone would join in, singing all the way to Argyle. (c.1940s)
- In 1950, the Argyle area had a flood. One school van almost tipped into the water when travelling to school. The roads were staked, but it was difficult to tell where it was. As a result the Ross family children (N 25-14-1W) walked down the railroad track to school, 3.5 miles until the water receded.

- Inez (Lillies), Bob & Ern Dawson remember: (c.1950s)

*"There were 12 kids fit into the school van we took to school. It was a Red Plymouth station wagon owned by George McKarracher, with wooden benches at the back for the little kids. The Willox kids always sat on the top of other kids, as they were the last ones picked up. Often the little kids would sit on the older one's knees.*

*Gordie Willox, Harvey Watson, Elaine Taplin and Irene McKarracher were the van drivers we remember. The vans would collect kids from their homes, and take them to Argyle, to the school. From here, large busses would take high school kids to Stonewall. They remember a wooden **School Van** sign on the top of the cars, stargin when George McKarracher began driving. He had brackets to clip the double sided sign to the roof.*

*One time, when Irene McKarracher was driving, she slid off the road in a ¾ 7 passenger van with kids, coming home from Argyle. She yelled "We're going in", drove out through the ditch and back onto the road. There was little snow then, but the roads were very slippery.*

*Inez and Ern remember the snow being too deep on Road 79 N, so to get them to road 322 to meet the van, a stone boat and horses were used, with a bale as a seat! They remember snow being around 6' deep, and sometimes their father would harrow the road, over packed snow to flatten and smooth the road. The year after this, the Municipality of Rockwood raised up the road. They also remember snows being so deep and drifts so high on the Warren Road, they could walk and touch the telephone wires.*

*Ern & Inez walked together for two winters to Grassmere school, following the roads from their family farm. Ern attended Grassmere from Grade 1-5, Inez was younger and only attended for two years, before the school was closed, and the students were transferred to Brant-Argyle.*

- In the late 1960's students were transported by private cars (often as many as 10 per car) and then high school students were bused to Stonewall Collegiate.

## **School Van Drivers:**

### **Horse Drawn Vans & Sleighs:**

- Tom Snell
- Roy & Edgar Peacock
- Martin Jensen – had a horse drawn van, used for Argyle's Reunion 1970.
- Murdock McCuish – used horses and van/sleigh
- Langley Brothers
- John Dodd – horse drawn van
- Pat Suche
- Lawrence Scott
- Joe Fisher
- Jim Ritchie
- George Willox

### **Personal Car**

- Roy & Edgar Peacock – model T truck front, rectangular box back.
- Bill Campbell Sr.
- Tom Bruce – one of the first to use a car, Model T Ford.
- Henry Last - Essex car, which had a rumble seat, also a Ford Model A in summer. Winter saw a team of horses used.
- John Ritchie – drove until school busses began
- Elmer Stewart – drove van
- Frank Grandmont – drove a 1929 custom Graham Paige
- Harvey Watson
- Gordie Willox,
- Elaine Taplin
- Irene McKarracher

### **School Bus:**

- Harvey Watson – school bus
- Garnet Laing – school bus (1990s)
- Gwen Buchanan – school bus (1990s-2010s)
- Wayne Rothwell – school bus (1990s)
- Janice Nunn – school bus (1990s-2010s)
- Bill Crockatt – School bus (1980s)
- Lloyd Taplin – school bus (1980s-90s)

### **Caretakers:**

- Fred & Emily Snell
- Bob Reid
- Harry Snyder (1945- ?)

- Bob Reid was the caretaker (c1965) and was paid \$90 per month (\$1080/year) to shovel coal into the furnace, clean the school and cut the grass.

*Rip saw, Hack saw, Buck saw, Bang  
 We are the girls of the Argyle Gang.  
 Are we in it, we should smile,  
 We've been in it for a long, long while.  
 Clever, handsome, that's no bash,  
 Brant Consolidated. Yes! By Gosh!* - Isobel Jones (nee Snell)

### Other School memories:

- **Train & schoolyard:**

"In the schoolyard, with the train running along the west fence, we loved to teas and really coax the engineer to blow steam as us as we rand beside them." Jack Warburton (mid 1920s)

*"Another game we had was to run along the fence line when a train was passing by. The driver of the train always obliged us by pulling the whistle and blowing steam out."* Dolly Hoffman

Inez Dawson (Lillies) remembers when funeral processions passed by the school yard, and the kids were out in the playground for recess. They were expected to stop playing, and bow their heads as the procession passed by.

- **Barns & outbuildings:**

Bob Dawson remembers starting school at Brant Argyle in 1956-7 and the barns were still there, but not used anymore. His brother Ern remembers playing "running the gauntlet" a game where kids would the length of the barns, in front of them, and other kids would throw snowballs at you, trying to hit the runners. They also remember playing "Evey-Ivy-Over", over the bathroom building at the back of the school.

- **Getting the Mail:**

*'Those of us who lived a distance from town would be allowed to go to the post office for our mail before going home from school. I can still remember the mad race we*

*had to get to the post office, pick up our mail and catch our ride home in the school van. Tom Henry (postmaster) had to reprimand us often for pushing and shoving got first at the wicket. Often he would hand out the mail to those standing at the back of the line.”* Dolly Hoffman

- **Punishments:**

Bob Dawson remembers having to write lines on the blackboard. Another punishment was the teacher would draw a small circle on the board, and you had to stand up against the board, keeping your nose in the drawn circle. It was often a bit higher than your nose, so you would have to stand up on your toes.

Period	Principals of Brant-Argyle School
1914-1916	<a href="#">Frank Samuel Cockbill</a> (c1891-?)
1916-1917	James Sampson
1917-1920	<a href="#">William Stanley “Bill” Lockhart</a> (1896-1978)
1920-1923	Isabel Inkster
1923-1925	F. N. Sexsmith
1925-1929	Fred Morgan
1929-1932	<a href="#">Alexander M. Segall</a> (?-?)
1932-1937	<a href="#">Richard Buck</a> (1907-1994)
1937-1942	<a href="#">William Morrow Ingram</a> (1907-1964)
1942-1943	K. W. J. Pomeroy, Miss Handel, John E. Ingot
1943-1944	<a href="#">George Wesley Bartlett</a> (1876-1950)
1944-1947	<a href="#">Arnold Marshall Leech</a> (1911-1998)
1947-1950	<a href="#">Joseph Albert Mayers</a> (1909-1980)
1950-1955	<a href="#">Walter Yanchyshyn</a> (1922-1997)
1955-1958	Phil Kozokowsky
1958-1961	Mrs. Olofia J. Melan
1961-1963	Aneita Fletcher
1963-1965	Bernie Weins
1965-1985	Fred Post
1985-1987	Jim Drysdale
1987-1989	Joanne Dowsett
1989-1991	Blair duGray
1991-1994	Gail Peterkin Romanchuk
1994-1998	Greg Ross
1998-1999	Gord Revel
1999-?	John Mak

## **Principals of Brant-Argyle School – Further information from MHS Website**

### **Frank Samuel Cockbill (c1891-?) Educator**

Born in England and educated at the University of London, he immigrated to Canada in 1911 and, three years later, was appointed the first Principal of [Brant Consolidated School](#), serving until 1916. On 11 October 1915, he married English immigrant Dorothy Lydia Saunders (c1896-1982) in the [RM of Thompson](#). They had three children: Dorothy Cockbill Campbell, Joan Cockbill Fisher, and Frank William John Cockbill (c1919-1974). They resided at Roseisle, Manitoba. He died sometime before 1974 and was buried in the [Roseisle Cemetery](#).

### **William Stanley “Bill” Lockhart (1896-1978) Educator, school inspector.**

Born at Listowel, Ontario on 24 July 1896, he moved with his family to Selkirk, Manitoba where he was raised and educated. After attending the [Central Normal School](#) in 1913, the next year he began a life-long career in education, first as a teacher and later as Principal of [Brant School](#) (1917-1920), [Woodnorth School](#) (1924-1926), [King George School](#) (1926-1928), [Central School](#) (1928-1932) and [Earl Haig School](#) (1932-1938) and, as of 1938, as a [School Inspector](#) based at Baldur. He retired in the summer of 1963 and was succeeded by G. A. Guilbault, former Principal of the Lorette High School.

On 27 June 1925, he married Phyllis Garside Holt. They had three children: Ileen Lockhart (wife of Bob Brydon), Shirlee Lockhart (wife of Mike McCoy), and Keith Lockhart. He was a member of the Masons (Glenboro Lodge) and Baldur United Church. He died at Baldur on 26 March 1978.

### **Alexander M. Segall (?-?) Educator.**

He was the Principal of [Brant School](#) (1929-1932), [Woodlands School](#) (1934-1937), [Stockton School](#) (1937-1939), [Ninette School](#) (1939-1940), and [Tyndall School](#) (1940-1943).

### **Richard Buck (1907-1994) Educator.**

Born in the [RM of Rockwood](#) on 25 December 1907, son of Richard Buck and Annie Miller, he was educated at the [Stonewall School](#) and the [Central Normal School](#) (1930) then taught school at various places in rural Manitoba. He was the Principal of [Brant School](#) (1932-1937), [Benito School](#) (1938-1941), [Cypress River School](#) (1941-1945), [Carberry School](#) (1945-1957), and [Gimli School](#) (1957-1964). He retired at Gimli. On 16 August 1933, he married Frances Maud Moore (1904-1996). They had two children, Frances Anne Buck and Gordon Alan Buck. He died at [Brandon](#) on 24 February 1994 and was buried in the [Brandon Cemetery](#).

### **William Morrow Ingram (1907-1964) Educator.**

Born at [Minitonas](#) on 10 February 1907, son of Samuel Ingram and Minnie Caroline Horne, he attended the [Swan River High School](#), [Dauphin Normal School](#), and [Central Normal School](#). He then taught at [Ethelbert School](#), Little Woody School, [Bowsman School](#), and [Stonewall School](#). He was the Principal of [Brant School](#) (1937-1942), [Isabella School](#) (1944-1949), [Cardale School](#) (1950-1953), [Myrtle School](#) (1953-1957), [Brookdale School](#) (1957-1959), and [Neepawa School](#).

During the Second World War, he served with the YMCA at Camp Shilo. On 29 December 1930, he married Minnie Bonnar Urquhart at [Swan River](#). They had four daughters: Jean Ingram Fortune, Hazel Ingram Grossart, Jessie Ingram Williamson, and Wilma Ingram. He was a member of the Neepawa United Church and Canadian Order of Foresters.

He died at [Neepawa](#) on 26 September 1964 and was buried in [Marney Cemetery](#).

### **George Wesley Bartlett (1876-1950) Educator, school inspector.**

Born in Ontario on 5 February 1876, he was educated at Glencoe, Ontario and the Winnipeg Collegiate. He later attended the [University of Manitoba](#) where he received his Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Pharmacy, and Master of Arts degrees. He did post-graduate work at the University of Southern California, University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin where he obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree.

His teaching career started in 1887 when he held night classes to teach English in the Steinbach area. He later was Principal at [Arden School](#) (1908-1910) and [Gladstone High School](#) as well as [School Inspector](#) at Eriksdale and Hamiota. Serving as Principal of the [Manitou Normal School](#) (1931-1933), he then became a school inspector for the St. Vital area. He also held positions in other areas of northern and southwestern Manitoba including Treherne, Shoal Lake and Souris. Bartlett was noted for being one of the first educators to introduce intelligence and achievement testing in Manitoba schools. He continued teaching after his retirement in June 1941, including a year as Principal of [Brant School](#) (1943-1944) but was eventually forced to leave the profession due to illness.

A veteran of the First World War, he enlisted with the Royal Canadian Engineers as a private. For his service overseas, he was awarded the military medal and bar. Following the war, he taught at Khaki College in Ripon, England before returning to Canada. Active in the Boy Scouts as early as 1905, he served as Gilwell camp chief for Manitoba. He married Annie Wilson McFarlane on 16 July 1903 at La Broquerie.

He died at Deer Lodge Hospital in Winnipeg on 21 March 1950 and was buried in the military plot at [Brookside Cemetery](#).

See also: Historic Sites of Manitoba: [Bartlett School No. 2080](#) (1921-1966)

### **Arnold Marshall Leech (1911-1998) Educator.**

Born at [Virden](#) on 2 September 1911, son of Marshall Leech and Edith Mary Knight, he was the Principal of [Brant School](#) (1944-1947), [Gunton School](#) (1947-1948), [Altamont School](#) (1948-1952), Snow Lake School (1952-1953), [Cardale School](#) (1953-1955), [Pipestone School](#) (1955-1961), and [Reston School](#) (1961-1973). He died at Reston on 26 February 1998 and was buried in the [Reston Cemetery](#).

### **Joseph Albert Mayers (1909-1980) Educator.**

Born in the [RM of Victoria](#) on 2 January 1909, son of Winnifred McDermott, he was raised and educated at Holland, Manitoba. He then worked at various places in Manitoba as an assistant station agent for the [Canadian Pacific Railway](#). Later he received a teaching certificate from the [Brandon Normal School](#) and taught at San Clara, Pratt, Hazelridge, Warren, and Lac du Bonnet. In 1939, he enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces and served until 1945. He was Principal of [Brant School](#) (1947-1950), [Warren School](#) (1950-1954), [Holland School](#) (1955-1958), and [Cartwright School](#) (1962-c1967). He retired from teaching in 1973 and moved from Cartwright to Lac du Bonnet. He died at [Lac du Bonnet](#) on 7 January 1980 and was buried in [Brookdale Cemetery](#).

### **Walter Yanchyshyn (1922-1997) Educator.**

Born at Innisfree, Alberta in 1922, son of Harry Yanchyshyn and Margaret Hlushak, he served in the Royal Canadian Artillery from 1943 to 1945 then attended the Winnipeg Normal School. He worked for 39 years as a teacher and administrator, serving as the Principal of [Lyleton School](#) (1947-1950), [Brant School](#) (1950-1955), and Whytewold Beach School (1955-1959). He ended his career as Assistant Principal and Department Chair at the Red River Community College. He was an Assistant Supervisor between 1963 and 1965, inspecting off-reserve schools in northern Manitoba and Hutterite colony schools. He retired in 1984. He died at his Winnipeg home on 11 July 1997 and was buried in [Chapel Lawn Memorial Gardens](#).