

# RESEARCH BULLETIN

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## NEW BRUNSWICK: INTERIM REPORT ON COMMON SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE IN THE 19TH CENTURY C.A. Hale

The following interim report on the architecture of primary and secondary schools built in New Brunswick before 1930 describes the methods employed to acquire a bank of basic information on the subject and indicates general trends and highlights that can be postulated thus far in the study.

A notice of the intended study soliciting contributions from the public was placed in regional magazines and provincial educational journals, and respondents were sent detailed questionnaires. The answers, varying in detail and accuracy, enabled us to add extant school buildings of different periods and types to our sample, but by no means represented a comprehensive survey. Questionnaires circulated in New Brunswick also supplied us with the names of a number of people who have researched extant school buildings although meetings with them have yet to take place.

Although response has generally been positive from most of the religious and private institutions that conduct schools, their small staffs and the accessibility of their archives have in many cases delayed detailed responses. Consequently, little analysis of the architecture of this type of school has yet been possible.

Another major source of information is the Canadian Inventory of Historic Building's recording of pre-1930 architecture in the province. For the most part, this survey provides photographs of school buildings (again, not a comprehensive survey, nor technically a "random" selection), and unverified dates of construction. Most were recorded in the early 1970s and it is not yet certain what proportion has survived. The bulk of the pre-1930 rural buildings have not been used as schools since at least 1967, the year of the provincial government's extensive consolidation of schools, and almost all are owned privately or by community organizations. Now serving a broad range of functions, such as cottages, community halls, workshops, warehouses, and stores, many have been physically altered and even removed from their original sites, thereby making systematic research on any general, all-inclusive basis impossible.

Provincial governmental records provide a fascinating range of material. Prime among these records are the annual reports prepared by the office of the Superintendent of Schools, established in 1852. Never before had such detailed information been made available; the superintendent, initially assisted by 14 inspectors, was required to provide a semi-annual schedule on each county, indicating all of the schools in each, based on registers and other returns. Grants were paid on the basis of these returns (see Table 1). In addition to the legislative acts starting in 1802, the minutes of the provincial Board of Education are a useful source of information, but as yet have only been reviewed through secondary sources. The board also published occasional circulars on school designs, and after 1858 it offered, free of charge, standard plans and specifications to school districts.

Among the more informative secondary sources on the New Brunswick educational system are J.R. Inch's "Historical Sketch of Education in New Brunswick" (in



COUNTY	SUBJECTS ACTUALLY TAUGHT AND NUMBER OF PUPILS IN EACH															SCHOOL BOOKS.		SCHOOL HOUSES.									
	Spelling.	Reading.	Writing.	Arithmetic	English Grammar.	Geography.	History.	Book keeping.	Geometry.	Mensuration.	Land Surv'g.	Navigation.	Algebra.	Other subjects not prescribed.	Common Needlework.	Those approved by Board of Education.	Others.	Description					By what means.				
																		No. of School Houses.	Log.	Framed.	Other.	With Yard or Privy.	Without Yard or Privy.	No. owned by Districts.	No. rented.	No. erected during year.	
Albert	556	525	276	245	109	73	17	1	2	2	..	..	2	..	30	approved	& others.	38	4	26	4	3	35	35	1	5	1 by Teacher.
Carleton,	1104	1016	673	505	307	127	32	10	1	1	..	..	..	8	129	do.	do.	43	5	24	a	a	a	1	17	..	2 by pub. subscrip'n.
Charlotte,	1651	1990	1380	1226	488	451	123	49	8	14	..	2	16	..	249	do.	do.	93	a	a	a	22	71	89	38	3	1 by Sons of Temp.
Gloucester,	484	516	354	261	45	26	21	1	2	5	..	..	..	3	69	do.	do.	24	15	9	..	1	23	2	..	..	Public subscription.
Kent,	1120	977	507	504	152	80	20	6	1	4	..	..	..	11	143	do.	do.	40	a	a	a	36	4	28	13	1	Public subscription.
King's,	1591	1443	1085	818	315	261	56	28	8	9	4	2	6	2	134	do.	do.	105	20	91	..	25	80	100	5	..	Public subscription.
Northumberland	1493	1416	880	643	134	173	11	4	..	3	..	..	5	37	107	do.	do.	57	9	27	9	13	44	48	5	2	Public subscription. (Log) by inhabitants (Framed) by assess't.
Queen's	853	797	584	449	221	171	20	21	7	7	3	1	3	5	29	do.	do.	70	19	52	..	a	a	69	..	1	By assessment.
Restigouche,	207	252	135	103	25	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	41	do.	do.	21	15	6	..	..	21	21	..	..	At private expense.
Saint John,	2243	1555	1430	1066	645	640	242	59	12	49	23	8	13	37	169	do.	do.	56	10	43	1	54	..	30	20	1	By assessment.
Sunbury,	563	516	388	373	211	161	52	19	11	19	3	..	7	20	65	do.	do.	25	1	24	..	2	23	16	5	2	At private expense.
Victoria,	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	do.	do.	a	a	a	..	a	a	a	a	a	
Westmoreland,	366	1002	731	600	236	200	30	36	8	8	1	..	4	..	191	do.	do.	71	2	69	..	2	69	62	9	2	1 by Teacher, 1 private expense.
York,	1381	1433	1112	836	362	368	91	14	2	2	..	..	..	12	184	do.	do.	57	7	50	..	47	10	39	a	1	By Madras Board.
Totals....	13,612	13,438	9535	7529	3250	2737	715	248	62	123	34	13	56	134	1540			700	107	421	14	205	380	540	113	19	

**Table 1.** New Brunswick Schools in 1852: "Subjects actually taught, and Number of Pupils in each - School Books - School Houses." ("Report on the Parish Schools of New Brunswick for Part of the Year 1852 by the Chief Superintendent of Parish Schools," Journal of the House of Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick 24 February-3 May 1853 [Fredericton: John Simpson, 1853], Appendix, Table B, p. xcvi.)

Canada: An Encyclopedia of the Country, Vol. 3, Toronto, Linscott, 1898), and G.W. Hay's "History of Education in New Brunswick" (in Canada and its Provinces, Vol. 14, Publishers' Association of Canada, Toronto, 1914). Several theses and dissertations have been written on education in New Brunswick, the most useful being J.H. Fitch's "A Century of Educational Progress in New Brunswick, 1800-1900" (University of Toronto, 1930), and Katherine F.C. MacNaughton's The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 1784-1900 (ed. A.G. Bailey, University of New Brunswick, 1947). Josephine B. Lynam's "Educational Institutions in New Brunswick, 1830-1871" (McGill University, 1947) is another valuable source, as is Amos M. Anderson's "The History of Education in the Province of New Brunswick" (New York University, School of Education, 1940). Hugh J. Whalen's The Development of Local Government in New Brunswick (Dept. of Municipal Affairs, Fredericton, 1964) describes some of the major financial and administrative developments in the province's history. While none deal directly with school architecture, except, to some extent, Lynam's work, they provide a comprehensive historical context. A series of detailed articles, "New Brunswick Schools of the Olden Time" by the Rev. W.O. Raymond, appeared in the Educational Review (Saint John) between 1892 and 1897, and describes schooling in the province during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Educational Review, which evolved out of the New Brunswick Journal of Education (June 1886-87), also provides information on contemporary developments in local education and teaching aids for most of the period covered in this study. Community histories were also examined for specific references to their schools; except for some illustrations, however, they were generally disappointing. More often they concentrate on social history and proved to be of peripheral relevance to our study.

Both the photographic and maps and plans collections at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick provide a rich source of illustrative material, as do the photographic collections of the Centre d'Études Acadiens, University of Moncton; the Madawaska Museum; the Nicholas Denys Historical Society, Shippegan, and the Centre d'Études Madawaskaian, Edmundston, which were perused on our behalf by B.M. Schmeisser, Project Historian, Parks Canada. These collections contain illustrations, not found elsewhere, of early schools in French-speaking areas of the province. Kings Landing Historical Settlement, Prince William, New Brunswick, features several old schoolhouses and the relevant research notes were made available. The One-Room School Collection of the Historical Resources Administration in Fredericton is expected to provide a valuable aspect of the study.

### History Prior to 1800

Although in 1786, two years after the province was created out of the Nova Scotian hinterland, the legislature granted an endowment for a college or academy at Fredericton, which became the College of New Brunswick in 1800, this educational institution did not influence the development of other schools in New Brunswick. The Parish Schools Act, the first important act relating to schools for the general public, was passed by the provincial legislature in 1802. The previous lack of legislative support for schools had resulted in a variety of solutions for educating the youth. Many children had received very little education, not surprising given their pioneer environment. Early missionary efforts among the Indians by the Recollets, and later the Jesuits, were in operation as early as the beginning of the 17th century.<sup>1</sup> The unsettled conditions of life caused by military strife, which characterized the French period, prevented the permanent establishment of an educational system although the church did provide some rudimentary instruction.<sup>2</sup>

By 1767 the scattered population of New Brunswick was estimated at only 1196.<sup>3</sup> Schools, where they did exist, were usually held in winter in private



residences. Roads were "practically non-existent" and consequently pupils' attendance was irregular<sup>4</sup> for many years, even after the Parish Schools Act. Apart from the possible lack of appreciation for formal education and the small population, money was not plentiful.

One of the earliest school masters of Maugerville, David Burpee, kept school one winter [in the 1760s], receiving four shillings a month for each pupil. The tuition fees were paid in a great variety of ways; in work, in grain, leather, musquash skins, rum, hauling hay and making shoes; he only handled 10 s. in cash for his entire winter's work.<sup>5</sup>

By comparison, a woman servant at the time earned ten shillings per month, and the ordinary rate for farm workers was two shillings a day.

The settlement of over ten thousand Loyalists in Nova Scotia forced the political establishment of New Brunswick in 1784. The Loyalists provided the impetus for the founding of the College of New Brunswick. Still unaided by provincial legislation and funding, the number of schools began to grow. The Royal Instructions to Governor Carleton provided at least 200 acres for the support of a schoolmaster in each parish - the civil basic division established in New Brunswick.<sup>6</sup> Given the generally uncultivated state of the land, this was not a great boon to the development of schools. Yet the number of schools continued to increase as a result of private enterprise and the efforts of charitable and religious groups, particularly the British-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (commonly referred to as the S.P.G.), sponsored by the Church of England.

The schools operated by the S.P.G. were the best of a mixed lot in the pre-1800 period.<sup>7</sup> Little is known of the school buildings connected with them, if indeed any of their schools were conducted in separate structures. One of the society's earliest schoolhouses was opened in 1774 at Fort Cumberland. Others were located in Carleton (West Saint John), Campobello, St. Andrews, Kingston, Norton, Sussex Vale, and Springfield. The organization employed 40 teachers at its peak, but in 1836 withdrew its aid from the province,<sup>8</sup> leaving the field open to other voluntary efforts.

Indians were taught by another group called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, which moved into Nova Scotia and New Brunswick after the American Revolutionary War. They conducted at least seven schools, but by 1794 only one remained, in Sussex Vale. This society withdrew its aid in 1833.<sup>9</sup> Not until 1867 was provision again made for Indian education.

Many private schools which taught an impressive variety of subjects were also advertised in the newspapers during this period; however, most appear to have been in major settlements, in private homes or rented quarters supported by the parents of the pupils. As the 19th century progressed and provincial aid to parish and other schools increased, almost all of the early private schools appear to have been phased out.

Physical descriptions of actual school buildings before 1800 seem to be rare; however, one rural schoolhouse erected in 1787 is described as typical of its time: constructed of logs, it was small and plain, measuring 22 by 20 feet. To save expense it served as both a schoolhouse and a "Chapel of Ease";<sup>10</sup> a union of functions apparently not uncommon for the period. Another schoolhouse, built for about £87 in 1790 for the Indians, stood "on a beautiful little knoll very nearly opposite the site of the old Parish Church at Woodstock":

It was a log building, twenty-six feet long by twenty-two wide, with a porch at one end. The roof was covered with hand-shaven pine shingles, three feet long, laid twelve inches to the weather. At the end opposite the porch was a large chimney, the stones of which were laid in clay. On each side were two windows, and smaller ones at each end. These windows were placed high above the floor in order that the pupils might be



unable to see anything passing outside which might distract their attention. The windows on the side were only two and a half feet wide and four feet high, with twenty, seven by nine inch panes of glass of which twelve were in the upper sash and eight in the lower.<sup>11</sup>

Under the schoolhouse was a log-walled cellar for storing supplies to be issued to the Indian students as incentives to attend.

### Schools in New Brunswick: 1802-52

In 1802 the provincial legislature took the first step in establishing a provincially funded system of schools. Public schooling in the province

had a slow and cautious beginning along traditional lines, uninspired by the democracy to which the American experiment was dedicated.... New Brunswick leaders, delegating to the traditional agencies of Church and private initiative a large measure of responsibility for the education of plain folk, were thinking in terms of education for their own children, the leaders to be. They could not dream that the decorous decades would give way to boisterous years when a vigorous democracy would furnish the leaders of the province, leaders who would be none the better because of the educational deficiencies for which the old order was responsible.<sup>12</sup>

By the Parish Schools Act of 1802, ten pounds were granted to each teacher as part of his salary; the remainder was to be obtained by subscriptions from the parents whose children attended the school. The justice of the peace - then chief parish civil officer - was responsible for overseeing the distribution of the grants. No system of inspection was yet established, so the quality of instruction and accommodation varied widely.

In 1805 an act provided for a public grammar school in Saint John, and for two in each of the other counties. The province set aside £375 for these schools, to be distributed by the justices of the peace. Each parish was to receive the benefit of the school for one year, after which it would be moved to another parish, a system also sometimes practised in New England. Although the aim was no doubt to provide school services to as many communities as possible, "it certainly could not foster continuity of schooling or promote the establishment of permanent school buildings."<sup>13</sup> By 1805 two types of schools had theoretically been established in the province: parish schools, where the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic were taught, and county schools, whose teachers received a larger grant and presumably taught a wider range of subjects; except for the St. John Grammar School, however, the counties failed to take advantage of the grammar-school legislation.<sup>14</sup>

Three more acts regarding education were passed in 1816. One established a grammar school in St. Andrews, in addition to the grammar schools in Saint John, Fredericton and St. Stephen.<sup>15</sup> Provision was made for grammar schools to be established in each county, and a more elaborate system of financial assistance was introduced. In its provision for voluntary assessment for building, equipping and maintaining the school, the third act appears to have been head of its time, for subscription by the parents of students remained the common fund-raising method for some time. School grants were also made conditional and scaled in proportion to local contributions (raised by subscription). With the authorization of parish boards of school trustees, the justices of the peace lost much of their control over school affairs. This was an important precedent: educational functions were now separated from other municipal activities.<sup>16</sup> Still, no measures were taken to provide for school inspections besides trustees' visits. They were not paid expenses, transporta-

tion was arduous, and hence inspection was sporadic. The maximum provincial allotment per parish was raised to £100 in 1818, with a limit of £20 per school.<sup>17</sup> Obviously little construction was intended to be done with these grants.

In this period grammar schools

lacked the aristocratic character of the Academy [such as at Fredericton], but the term "grammar school" indicates that they were designed, as in England and the Thirteen Colonies, for the education of children of the middle classes, i.e., children whose elementary education was gained at home or in private schools, and who were able to continue their schooling beyond the years and the curriculum of the parish schools.... Actually many of the Grammar Schools of New Brunswick fell far short of the secondary curriculum they were supposed to follow, deteriorating to the point where they did little work beyond that of the parish schools. Yet year after year certain favored localities continued to draw the larger grant-in-aid and to enjoy the prestige of having a Grammar School.

One other system of education became particularly popular in the early 19th century. The Madras system, whereby senior pupils instructed younger students, began in 1819 under the auspices of the National Education Society in England. With the Central School in Saint John as its head training school, the society operated a number of schools in the province. The method owed its popularity to the lack of well-trained teachers in the province, but few such schools existed by the 1870s.

Before the 1840s

New Brunswick schools ... fall into the old familiar pattern. There were schools, partially supported by the state, for the upper classes, i.e., the Academy and Grammar Schools; and for the poor, namely the parish schools, Indian schools, and schools under the aegis of the Church, working through the S.P.G. or the National Board. The remaining schools were of the private venture type. The total number of schools was inadequate, and the curriculum, for the most part, elementary.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most important changes made in the administration of schools during the first half of the 19th century was contained in "An Act relating to Parish Schools," passed in 1833, which repealed all other parish school acts and appointed county Boards of Education. Parish school boards were to divide each parish into school districts supervised by boards of trustees, some of which were eventually elected rather than appointed. With the expansion and increasing complexity of school administration separate from other municipal functions already in progress, the way was open for administrative reform and eventually a more uniform system of public education. A further important step was made in 1847 when a provincial Board of Education was created. Model schools for training teachers were also begun in Fredericton and Saint John in the late 1840s, but the Fredericton school, destroyed by fire in 1850, was only re-opened in 1870.<sup>20</sup>

Not many schoolhouses existed during this period. Certainly few from the first half of the 19th century are at present known to have survived. Between 1802 and 1837, "schools were never public property, and often the school was kept in a private home,"<sup>21</sup> and prior to 1871 the number of buildings erected specifically for school purposes was very low:

It would appear that comparatively few communities obtained land and built school houses, for when the Common Schools Act was passed in 1871 only a fraction of the then-existing trustee boards owned what school buildings there were. Since schools could not spring out of the ground like mushrooms, and since few lands in this thinly populated province could bring in

revenue in the form of rents, school lands were of little use to people too poor or too indifferent to spend money on school buildings. Sometimes the community used whatever was available; sometimes the teacher rented a vacant room or building, or used their own homes.<sup>22</sup>

Two examples of pre-1850 schools with known dates of construction have been definitely identified thus far, although others are believed to exist, at least until recently. One, the Chamcook School is near St. Andrews, and the other, the "Hailsplitter School," was moved from its original site to the Kings Landing Historical Settlement in Prince William, New Brunswick. The Chamcook building (Fig. 1) is reported to have been built in 1845.<sup>23</sup> Not unexpectedly, its architecture is extremely plain and functional. A gable-roofed, wooden building with a central chimney, three windows symmetrically placed in the façade, and three tall windows and an entrance on one side, it is typical of many such schoolhouses built even later in the century. The "Hailsplitter School" (Fig. 2), which derives its contemporary name from its roof type, is atypical due to the hip-roof. The exterior is shingled and its restored interior (Fig. 3) only approximates the original since the building had not been used as a school for some time prior to its acquisition by Kings Landing.

### Schools in New Brunswick: 1852-ca. 1900

Educational reform began to accelerate dramatically with the 1852 "Act for the better establishment and maintenance of the Parish Schools" which appointed a provincial superintendent of schools - a major administrative innovation - and required annual reports to the legislature. In 1852 the schools were generally inferior; 107 log schoolhouses (see Table 1) did not suggest "a high estimate of the state of our School accommodation."<sup>24</sup> Only 205 of 585 schools had a yard or privy. The buildings were too small and lacked proper ventilation and even such fundamental teaching aids as books, blackboards, pencils and paper. Even seats and desks were sometimes absent. The superintendent urged the correction of this state of affairs:

Nor can a much better state of things be expected until the principles of School Architecture shall be better understood by the circulation of cheap abridgements of such works as Barnard's School Architecture, demonstrating that neatness is as economical as deformity, and accommodation as cheap as inconvenience. The application of the assessment principle to the erection of School Houses would render the burthen of that erection equable and light; ... and instead of the School House suggesting to the minds of children only painful and repulsive associations of thought, it would, were it but neat and commodious, have a pleasant place in their imagination and affections.<sup>25</sup>

Some of the schools in Westmorland County were "merely rough-boarded in without shingles on the sides; others completely gone to decay - so much so as only to be of use as a sheep pen,"<sup>26</sup> and at least one school in Carleton County was only 18 feet square.<sup>27</sup>

The report's most serious message was that if education was to improve and expand, a minimum standard of school architecture was imperative. The legislature responded six years later in the last parish schools act to be passed. It regulated the construction and ventilation of schoolhouses as well as furniture and apparatus. For the first time, a provincial agency supplied standard plans recommended for school buildings (Figs. 4 & 5). The act also established the "Superior School" to fill the gap between the parish and grammar schools, somewhat like a high school, and which received a large grant to ensure a high calibre of teachers. Also, the province was



divided into four inspectoral districts, rather than 14 as in 1852.

Schools in the northern part of the province were described in 1858:

Of all the evils connected with our educational affairs, and they are neither few nor small, the School-house is perhaps the saddest and the sorest. The appearance of many of these buildings, nay even the bare recollection of their appearance, is enough to make one laugh and weep by turns. In many districts of the North, the traveller would have no difficulty in singling out the School-house, if he would but pitch upon the smallest, dirtiest, shabbiest fabric in the settlement. The walls of a great many of the old log houses have never been shingled. In fact, the logs have been so roughly hewn as to render shingling either impossible or useless. The crevices between the logs are filled up with moss during Winter; and on the approach of Summer, the moss having either fallen out or been removed, the crevices become ready-made ventilators.... The interior is also in keeping with their external appearance. The floor is often of the roughest and rudest materials, - and a few cases, of nothing more than spruce or cedar rails, over which are laid two or three rough boards at one end of the room, where the Teacher usually sits or stands. The most of [the desks] ... have been of an inferior description at first, and time and knives have not improved them. The benches too are unsightly things, many of them nothing more than pieces of boards or planks laid upon blocks. These blocks, and many of the benches otherwise well enough made, are not infrequently found between two and three feet high. Just imagine the misery endured by young children condemned to sit and swing their aching legs for five or six hours daily in such a posture.<sup>28</sup>

Judging from the other inspectors' reports, these conditions were not uncommon during this period.

A simple one-room school described as a typical Acadian school in the 1870s is the Chockpish School (Figs. 6 & 7), built ca. 1869 and now part of the Village Historique Acadien, Caraquet, N.B.<sup>29</sup> Used as a school until 1963, it is furnished with pew-like benches and heated by a wood stove.

One attractive school closely resembling the superior schoolhouse plan of the late 1850s is the Hopewell Cape School (Fig. 8), built ca. 1872. Even the eaves trim is intact. Now a private dwelling, the building at one time accommodated ten grades. When it closed in 1963 it was functioning as a two-room school, with one classroom above the other,<sup>30</sup> but the upper window in the façade and the roof dormer may have been added, and originally it was likely a one-room school like the standard plan upon which its design appears to have been based. A similar school is the Tracy Mills School (Fig. 9). Although its date of construction is not yet known, the window and door arrangement and detail resemble the superior schoolhouse plan of the 1850s, except that this building is longer. Another school which may have been built according to the 1850s common schoolhouse plan is the Wakem School (Fig. 10) in Wakem Corner, New Brunswick: the tall, narrow windows along its sides suggest an early date.

It is difficult to determine how many school buildings resembled the 1850s standard plan, and how quickly it was adopted. Given the record of the past, as well as the appearance of many of the schools built even at the turn of the century, a large number of communities, particularly in the rural areas, were probably slow to change. The small, shingled Dumfries School (Fig. 11), built between 1880 and 1910,<sup>31</sup> for example, is no exception in the realm of rural school architecture of the second half of the 19th century. An unnamed gentleman was not impressed with the

schools of the 1860s:

The same poor idea is repeated again and again without variation, while there is not a hill nor a lake, nor a flower without its variety. Generally speaking, if you look on a lovely landscape the [school] house is the only ugly object in it. Yet there it stands quite square, hard and angular, with its one red door and its two little windows. Nature all various and charming and man with his one type of everlasting ugliness repeated without end, like a set of little boys copying pot-hooks and hangers, - pot-hooks and hangers, - pot-hooks and hangers and nothing else for evermore.<sup>32</sup>

Denominational schools were also operating in the province by the mid-19th century and an undetermined number were founded at this time. The Sackville Academy was launched by the Methodists in 1842,<sup>33</sup> and the Varley School opened in Saint John in 1854.<sup>34</sup> The latter was taken over by the province in the 1870s after the Common Schools Act was passed. A considerable number of Roman Catholic schools existed by the mid-century, but little research into these schools has yet been possible. Some functioned in much better buildings than the common or superior schools; the Baptist Seminary (Fig. 12), opened in Fredericton in 1835,<sup>35</sup> is a good example.

The most important act of the century relating to education was "An Act relating to Common Schools" (34 Vic. c 21), passed in 1871 and modelled after the Free Schools Act of Nova Scotia. Theodore H. Rand, formerly chief superintendent of schools in Nova Scotia, was appointed chief superintendent in New Brunswick and under his able guidance the new act was brought into effect. Prior to the act, legislation for voluntary assessment had been strongly resisted in many cases even though local school districts were not compelled to employ the assessment method exclusively.<sup>36</sup> By the Common Schools Act, all special grants to denominational schools and academies were abolished. County inspectors were appointed again, and were responsible for interpreting the law to the inhabitants, besides inspecting the schools.<sup>37</sup> The local school authorities became the district trustees. Schools were classified and organized by an ascending series of grades for the first time.<sup>38</sup>

The chief superintendent's annual report for 1872 referred to school plans:

Regulations 5-14 of the Board of Education cover the whole subject of school buildings, furniture and premises, adapted to the special requirements of the law. The difficult subjects of the heating and ventilating of school buildings, have been examined with much care. There is no feature of the school service of greater importance to the country than the character of the school accommodation. It is quite within the reach of every school district to secure houses and furniture suitable for school work, and to arrange the premises in a proper manner. The question of expense scarcely enters into the subject, since a suitable equipment is not necessarily more expensive than an unsuitable one, and whatever is essential to the physical welfare of the children while at school cannot properly be withheld by any district.<sup>39</sup>

To assist local districts in providing suitable school buildings, the Board of Education published plans for constructing and furnishing schools. J.T.C. McKean, a well-known Saint John architect, prepared a set of plans and specifications to satisfy the requirements of the Common Schools Act and the regulations of the board. The designs were approved and published in 1872. Each county inspector kept a set to be supplied free to school boards, and full sets of working drawings were also available free from the Education Office through the Board of Public Works.<sup>40</sup>

Most of the extant schools in the province appear to date from 1875 to 1900.

By 1900 some 1,770 public schools, a decrease of 35 from the previous year, were in existence.<sup>41</sup> While rural schools remained simple, their construction reflected a greater regard for ventilation, heating and space. McKean's plan book shows a simple diagram (Fig. 13) for heating and ventilating a small schoolhouse. Given the general lack of intact interiors, it is not possible to judge how widely this system was adopted; it is, however, one of the earliest instances of detailed plans for ventilation and heating. While no existing schools have been found to be exact replicas of McKean's plans, the old Nauwigewauk School (Fig. 14) is somewhat similar to one of his simplest buildings (Fig. 15), except that in place of the windows in the façade plan, the Nauwigewauk school has doors. Another building which appears to follow a McKean plan is the old Florenceville School. Complete with cupola and wheel window for ventilation as in the plan (Fig. 16), the Florenceville school (Fig. 17) is shown as it appeared in 1905 next to the significantly larger consolidated school which replaced it. The relative scale represented by the two buildings demonstrates a transition in school building that was occurring in some communities by the turn of the century.

Since most schools built in this period have been altered on the interior, we must rely upon the memories of those who attended or taught at them. We are particularly grateful to Mrs. Zaidee V. Williams for her recollections of the Long Reach School (Fig. 18), on the Kingston Peninsula, built in 1898-99. From 1899 until 1965, the eight-grade school served a three-mile district of a farming and lumbering community on the Saint John River. The building, about 30 by 26 feet, is located on a plot of land 70 by 80 feet. Girls' and boys' privies stood on opposite corners of the lot on the river side. The first teacher, Mrs. Williams's mother, planted spruce and acacia trees along the front and sides of the schoolyard. Inside the building were two cloakrooms, each with a door leading into the main classroom. The teacher's desk stood on a raised platform, and opposite was a cylindrical wood stove "that resembled an oil barrel." The stovepipe rose to the ceiling and ran horizontally to a chimney centred in the back wall.

Shelves were hooked on each side of the stove and in winter ink and water bottles and lunches were placed here to thaw, many a lad would leave [a] tight cover on [the] ink bottle, so [the] ceiling would be sprayed.<sup>42</sup>

Students took turns carrying water from a spring over the hill near the riverbank. The pails were placed inside on a bench near the girls' entrance. One boy was paid to start the fire early in the morning. The building is now a summer residence. An oil drum stove (Fig. 19) forms part of the One-Room School Collection of the Historical Resources Administration in Fredericton. It was manufactured by Enterprise Foundry Co. Ltd. in Sackville, New Brunswick, and has brackets for shelves.<sup>43</sup>

The Kincardine School (Fig. 20), a simple, gable-roofed, clapboarded building, is in excellent condition on the exterior. The local Presbyterian minister lent one hundred dollars to the community to build their school,<sup>44</sup> which opened in 1877. It is typical of many of this genre. The French Village School (Fig. 21) is also of interest. Its date of construction is unknown, but it was probably built before 1930, if not before 1900. A woodshed (Fig. 22) is situated at the side of the building, near the road, and two small privies (Fig. 23) stand some distance behind the schoolhouse. Toilet facilities were among the serious concerns of those associated with school architecture and sanitation. Whether these outbuildings, still standing in 1973, were part of the original school complex has not been verified, but if so, they would be rarities.

Several large public city schools built soon after the Common Schools Act present a contrast to rural schools and to the schools they replaced. The Albert School House (Fig. 24), built in west Saint John ca. 1876 in the Second Empire style by McKean and Fairweather, is a good example. It measured 100 by 150 feet, contained a fine exhibition hall in the upper storey and had two playgrounds. A total



of 560 children could be accommodated in ten classrooms; however, it was initially expected to accommodate 490 students.<sup>45</sup> Ten schools were replaced by one building. The Charlotte Street School (Fig. 25), built in Fredericton in 1884-85, is another example of the larger, pre-1900 city school. Designed by Dumaresq & Mott and constructed of brick and stone like the Albert School House, it contained six large classrooms (Figs 26, 27). Multi-classroom schools began to rise in many urban centres in the late 19th century. In scale and diversity they represent an innovation in school design, and were declaimed by skeptical contemporaries as "Palace School Houses."<sup>46</sup>

The Common Schools Act of 1871 provided the impetus for a large increase in school buildings. Within five years the number of school houses owned by the trustee corporations had risen by 111.93 per cent, and repairs and renovations had been made to 66 per cent of the school buildings they had owned before the act.<sup>47</sup> By 1900, both grammar and superior schools were providing secondary education. The restriction that only two superior schools could be established in the same parish was removed in 1895, resulting in a great increase of these buildings. By the turn of the century, every district had an elementary school, which graded into either grammar or superior schools.

### Conclusions

Few pre-1850 school buildings appear to be extant in New Brunswick. Reports on school architecture are also limited for this period. The annual reports of the chief superintendent of education beginning in 1852 provide the major written source of information on school architecture and its influences. Given the deplorable quality of many of the schoolhouses operating by the mid-century, vividly described in these reports, it is not surprising that few have survived.

While accurate quantification is hampered by the fact that many post-1830 schools are no longer publicly owned and managed, the largest group of pre-1930 school buildings still standing in the province are the small, simple, wooden rural schoolhouses. Inadequate facilities, long distances to travel, and poorly trained and paid teachers posed serious problems throughout the century, although the rate of improvement accelerated when provincial teachers' colleges were established in the late 1840s, and the provincial legislature increased its involvement in education, culminating in the Common Schools Act of 1871. Prior to this act the system had been plagued by a lack of uniformity and imposable regulations. Many educational reformers saw that the price of uniform quality could be achieved only through a complex administrative system and the equalization of financial resources by compulsory taxation. Not until the 1870s were these conditions met.

Although the bulk of the school buildings in the 1870s remained simple, they began to reflect a greater regard for sanitation and health. By the last quarter of the 19th century, the "Palace School Houses" began to be built in significant numbers in urban centres, followed by several consolidated schools in rural district centres (the latter are not covered in this stage of the study).

Standard plans were issued twice by the province during the pre-1900 period - after the Parish Schools Act of 1858 and after the Common Schools Act of 1871 - however, matching these plans with buildings, particularly the small rural type, does not provide infallible dating since many appear to have been based on traditional forms similar to early churches and even homes. The minimal internal subdivision meant that the exteriors could remain extremely simple. When it is considered that these schools were built on a meagre budget, usually by a local builder or a building bee, with the cheapest materials available, it is no surprise that the most prevalent form was a modest, clapboarded or shingled cube with a gable roof. The intriguing feature that distinguishes one form from another is invariably the proportions and

application of detail, including door and window placement. To estimate dates of construction by visual analysis based on architectural styles and their periods of popularity in the area is hazardous. Throughout the 19th century and even later, small rural communities preserved a strong sense of the traditional. It is even possible that doors, entablatures and lumber were salvaged from other buildings. Even after standard plans were provided free by the province, each building still bore the stamp of its builder and community. No two buildings are identical.

To provide a more comprehensive view of schools in the province before 1930, further research in the area of private and denominational schools, superior and grammar schools, and consolidated schools, is anticipated. Most, if not all, of the consolidated schools which are still standing were built after 1900. More study is also planned in the area of furnishings and teaching aids. It is hoped that as research progresses, more vital statistics such as dates of construction and builders will enlarge our selection of examples. The architectural evolution of schools in this and other provinces will also be linked in more depth with legislation, administration and funding up until 1930. Comparisons and connections will eventually be made to school architecture in other provinces, and similar schools and systems in other countries.

#### Endnotes

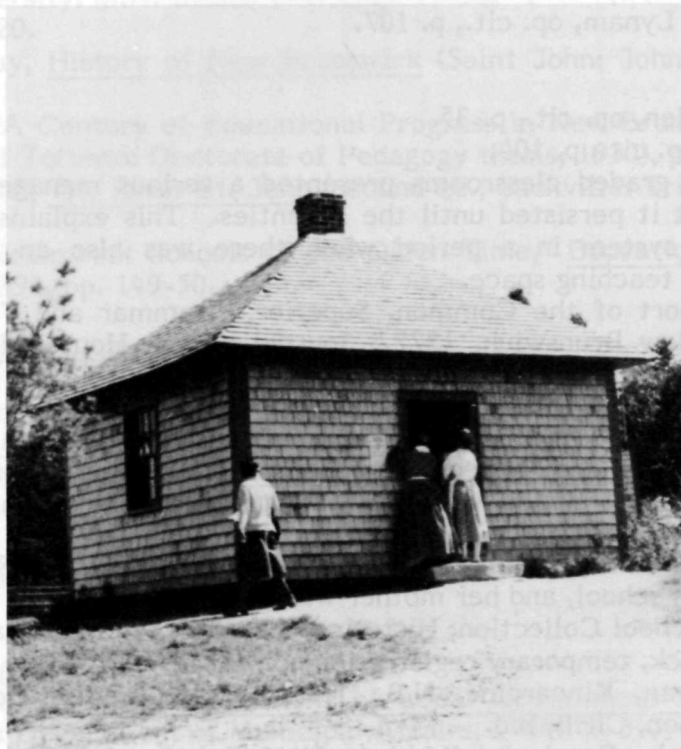
- 1 Josephine B. Lynam, "Educational Institutions in New Brunswick, 1830-1871," (McGill University: M.A. thesis, 1947), pp. 13-18.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
- 3 James Hannay, History of New Brunswick (Saint John: John A. Bowes, 1909), vol. 2, p. 66.
- 4 J.H. Fitch, "A Century of Educational Progress in New Brunswick, 1800-1900" (University of Toronto: Doctorate of Pedagogy thesis, 1930), p. 2.
- 5 W.O. Raymond, The River St. John (second ed., Sackville: Tribune Press, 1950), p. 170.
- 6 Ibid., "New Brunswick Schools of the Olden Time," Educational Review (Saint John), Jan. 1893, pp. 149-50.
- 7 Ibid., p. 150.
- 8 J.H. Fitch, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
- 9 Ibid., p. 9.
- 10 W.O. Raymond, "New Brunswick Schools of the Olden Time," op. cit., Feb. 1893, p. 171.
- 11 Ibid., May 1893, p. 231.
- 12 Katherine F.C. MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 1784-1900 (Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 1947), p. 41.
- 13 Ibid., p. 59.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 J.H. Fitch, op. cit., p. 16.
- 16 Hugh J. Whalen, The Development of Local Government in New Brunswick (Fredericton: Department of Municipal Affairs, 1964), p. 34.
- 17 See "An Act in addition to and in amendment of an Act entitled 'An Act to encourage the establishment of schools in this Province' " (58 Geo. III c 16).
- 18 Katherine F.C. MacNaughton, op. cit., p. 42.
- 19 Ibid., p. 41.
- 20 J.H. Fitch, op. cit., p. 53.
- 21 Ibid., p. 55.
- 22 Katherine F.C. MacNaughton, op. cit., pp. 57-58.
- 23 Paul Magnusson, letter to Co-ordinator, School Study, CIHB, 5 Apr. 1981.

- 24 "Report on the Parish Schools of New Brunswick for Part of the Year 1852," by the Chief Superintendent of Parish Schools, Journal of the House of Assembly of New Brunswick, 24 February - 3 May 1853 (Fredericton: John Simpson, 1853), p. ciii. Whether these are all detached school buildings or makeshift accommodations for school purposes is not known. If what Fitch and MacNaughton write of the dearth of school buildings until at least the 1840s is accurate, one wonders if the forties represented an active period of building, albeit crudely, if the statistics refer to buildings built solely as schools, or if the number given in Table 1 is considered small by both authors.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., "Extracts from Supplementary Reports of County Inspectors," p. xccll.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 "Extracts from the Reports of the District Inspectors for the year 1858," Journal of the House of Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick From the 10 February - 13 April 1859 (Fredericton: John Simpson, 1859), App. 1, p. dcixxxvi.
- 29 Albertine Rousselle-Duguay, "Ecole 5700 Education en Acadie et Ecole de Chockpish" (tps.: Dept. of Historical Resources of N.B., 1976), p. 52.
- 30 Raymond S. Gibbs, Hopewell Cape, N.B., CIHB School Questionnaire, 9 Dec. 1981. This school is also shown in Jean Cochrane's The One-Room School in Canada (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1981).
- 31 David Myles, Historical Resources Administration, Fredericton, N.B., Dec. 1981.
- 32 W.O. Raymond, op. cit., Feb. 1893, p. 172.
- 33 Josephine B. Lynam, op. cit., p. 107.
- 34 Ibid., p. 203.
- 35 Ibid., p. 202.
- 36 Hugh J. Whalen, op. cit., p. 35.
- 37 J.H. Fitch, op. cit., p. 104.
- 38 The lack of graded classrooms presented a serious management problem for teachers, yet it persisted until the seventies. This explains the popularity of the Madras system in a period when there was also an acute shortage of teachers and teaching space.
- 39 "Annual Report of the Common, Superior, Grammar and Training and Model Schools in New Brunswick, 1872," Journal of the House of Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick (Fredericton: G.E. Fenety, 1873), p. xxviii.
- 40 Ibid., pp. xxviii-xxvii.
- 41 "Annual Report of the Schools of New Brunswick," Journal of the House of Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick (Fredericton: Queen's Printer, 1901), Table 1. Public Schools: For the Year Ending June 30th, 1900. Preliminary, p. A3.
- 42 Zaidee V. Williams, letter to B.A. Humphreys, 14 Feb. 1981. Mrs. Williams taught at this school, and her mother was the first teacher.
- 43 One-Room School Collection, Historical Resources Administration, Fredericton, New Brunswick, temporary registration no. V354-5.
- 44 Mildred Girvan, Kincardine, N.B., letter to M. Carter, Head, Architectural History Section, CIHB, n.d.
- 45 New Brunswick. Provincial Archives, MYO/E-1, Bessie White sb, clippings from Telegram Journal (Saint John), ca. 1875-76, "The Albert School House, Carleton."
- 46 Ibid., "Victoria School House, St. John."
- 47 J.H. Fitch, op. cit., p. 88.





**Figure 1.** Chamcook School, New Brunswick, reported to have been built in 1845, shown as it appeared in 1974. It served as a one-room school until 1967 and was then used by local fishermen to repair and store their nets. In 1975 the building was moved from its original site and converted into a summer residence. (CIHB Phase 1, 1974.)



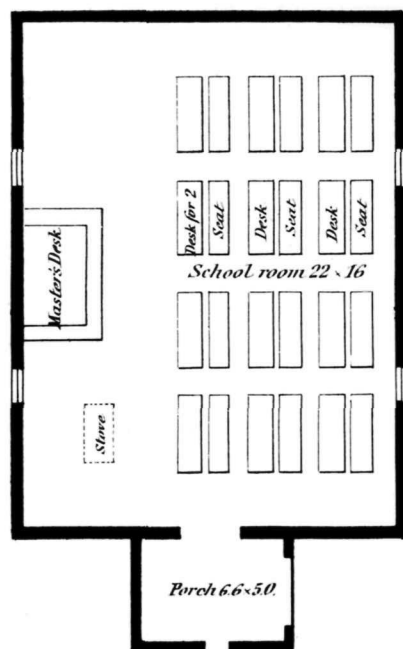
**Figure 2.** "Hailsplitter School," Kings Landing Historical Settlement, Prince William, New Brunswick, built ca. 1840. Erected by the inhabitants and measuring 16 x 15 x 7-1/2 feet, the building was used as a hen house before its acquisition by Kings Landing. The school inspector's return for Queensbury, York County, where the school was originally located, reports an average daily attendance of 10 boys and eight girls in 1844. (Kings Landing Historical Settlement.)



Figure 3. "Hailsplitter school," Kings Landing Historical Settlement, Prince William, N.B., built ca. 1840, interior view. (Kings Landing Historical Settlement.)

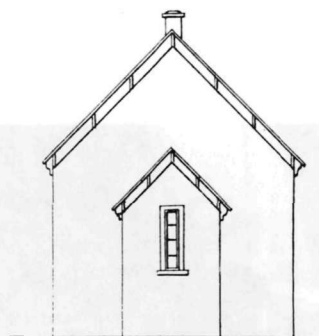
# EDUCATION OFFICE-PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

## PLANS OF NO. 2 OR COMMON SCHOOL HOUSE.

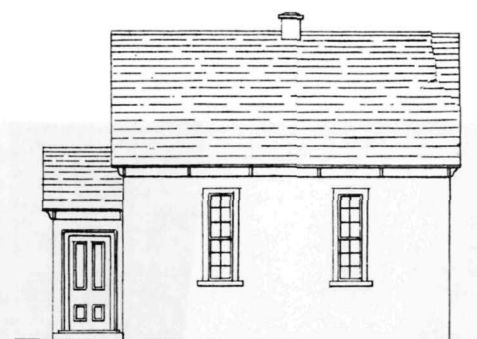


GROUND PLAN OF SCHOOL HOUSE.

Scale 6 feet to one inch.



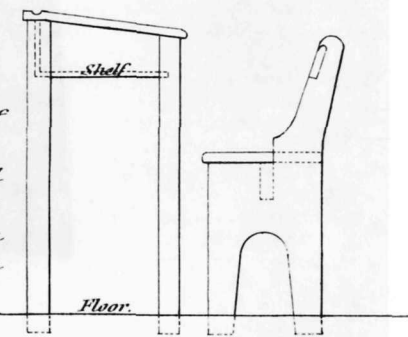
END ELEVATION.



SIDE ELEVATION

Scale 10 feet to one inch

No. 2 | Internal dimensions - School house 22 ft. by 16' and 12 ft. from floor to ceiling. - Porch 6.6 by 5.0. and 9 ft high. - This School house provides for 24 scholars at the desks and 12 on benches or Seats. The windows to be of 12 x 10 Glass, the sashes in two lengths, the upper sash to lower for Ventilation. - A double floor, the joints of the first floor to be covered with sheathing paper or birch bark. All the joints or seams of walls to be similarly covered before shingling or clapboarding. The first coat of plaster to be carried down to the floor. The walls to be lined inside as high as window sills and put on over the plastering. - A platform raised 2 steps for Master's Desk. Each desk to accommodate 2 scholars - the seats to be chairs or with a back rail. - Desks and seats to be arranged as on plan, all securely fastened to the floor, and increasing in height from front to back Desks, to accommodate children of different ages. Hooks and pins to be put up in the porch for Coats and Hats. (It is recommended that the windows be glazed with ground glass, and that the tops of the desks be made of birch, or other hard wood and varnished.)



DETAIL OF DESK AND SEAT INCH SCALE.

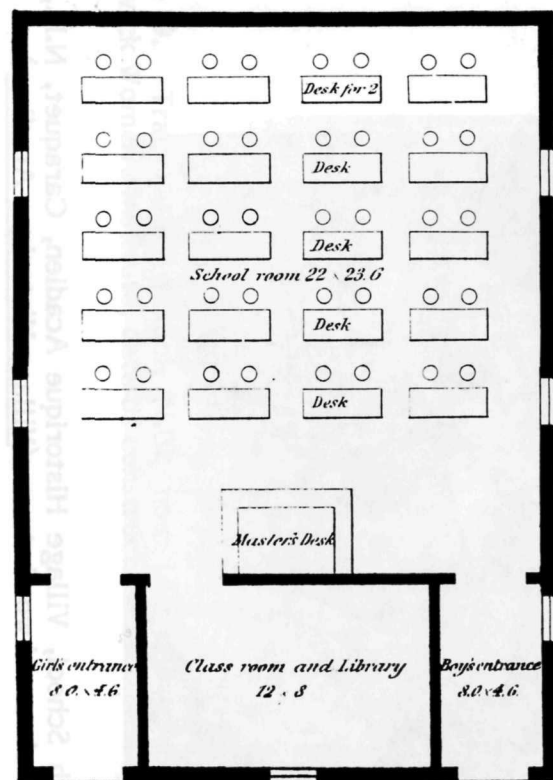
Medium size.

**Figure 4.** Standard plan and specifications recommended for a "common school house," issued by the Education Office after the Parish Schools Act of 1858, showing ground floor plan, side and end elevations, and desk and seat for pupils. (Fredericton: S.R. Miller, n.d.)



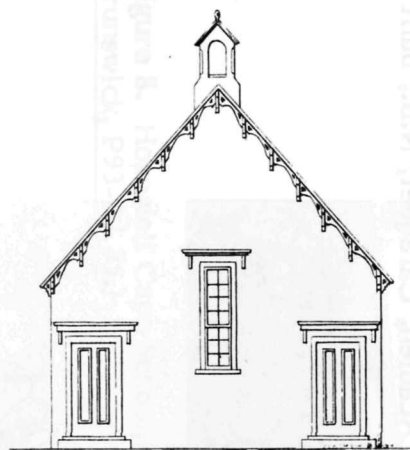
# EDUCATION OFFICE-PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

## PLANS OF NO.1 OR SUPERIOR SCHOOL HOUSE.

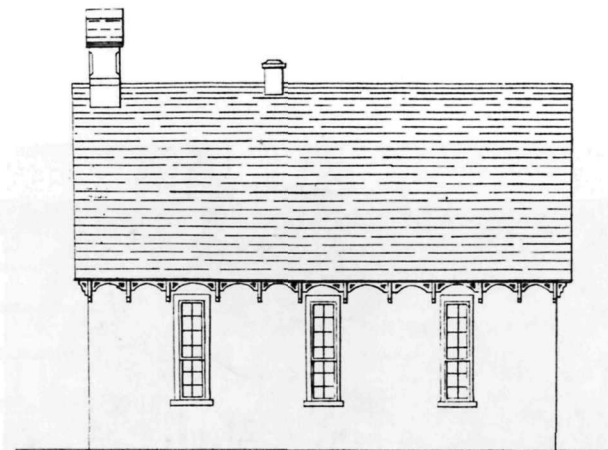


GROUND PLAN OF SCHOOL HOUSE.

Scale 6 feet to one inch.



END ELEVATION.

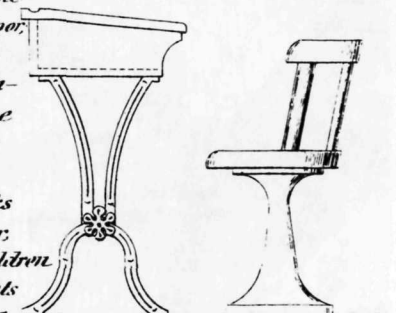


SIDE ELEVATION.

No.1

Scale 10 feet to one inch.

*Internal dimensions. School room 22 ft. by 23.6, and 12 ft. from floor to ceiling. Library 12 x 8. Entrances 8 x 4.6. This school provides for 40 scholars at the desks and for 20 on the benches or seats. The windows to be of 12 x 10 glass. The Sashes in two lengths, the upper sash to lower for Ventilation. - A double floor, the joints of the first floor to be covered with sheathing paper, or birch bark. - All the joints or seams of walls to be similarly covered before shingling, or clapboarding. - The first coat of plaster to be carried down to the floor. - The walls to be lined inside as high as window sills, and put on over the plastering. A platform raised 2 steps for Master's desk. - Each desk to accommodate 2 scholars - the seats to have rails, or Chairs. - Desks and seats to be arranged as on plan - all securely fastened to the floor, and increasing in height from front to back desks, to accommodate children of different ages. - Hooks and pins to be put up in Entrance lobbies for Hats and Coats. - (It is recommended that the windows be glazed with ground glass) - The tops of the desks to be of Birch or other hard wood, and varnished.*



DETAIL OF DESK AND CHAIR. INCH SCALE

Medium Size

**Figure 5.** Standard plan and specifications recommended for "superior school house," by the Education Office after the Parish Schools Act of 1858, showing ground floor plan, side and end elevations, and desk and chair for pupils. (Fredericton: S.R. Miller, n.d.)



**Figure 6.** Chockpish School, Village Historique Acadien, Caraquet, N.B., built ca. 1869. (Village Historique Acadien.)



**Figure 7.** Chockpish School, Village Historique Acadien, Caraquet, N.B., interior view showing long benches and wood stove. (Village Historique Acadien.)



**Figure 8.** Hopewell Cape School, N.B., built in ca. 1872. (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P93-A1 35.)



**Figure 9.** Tracy Mills School, N.B., now used for meetings of the local New Brunswick Women's Institute, date of construction unknown. (CIHB Phase 1, 1971.)

Figure 13. "Diagrams of method of Heating and Ventilating," prepared in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Education, 1872, by J.T.C. McKean. (Plans of School Houses (Fredericton: New Brunswick Board of Education, 1872.))



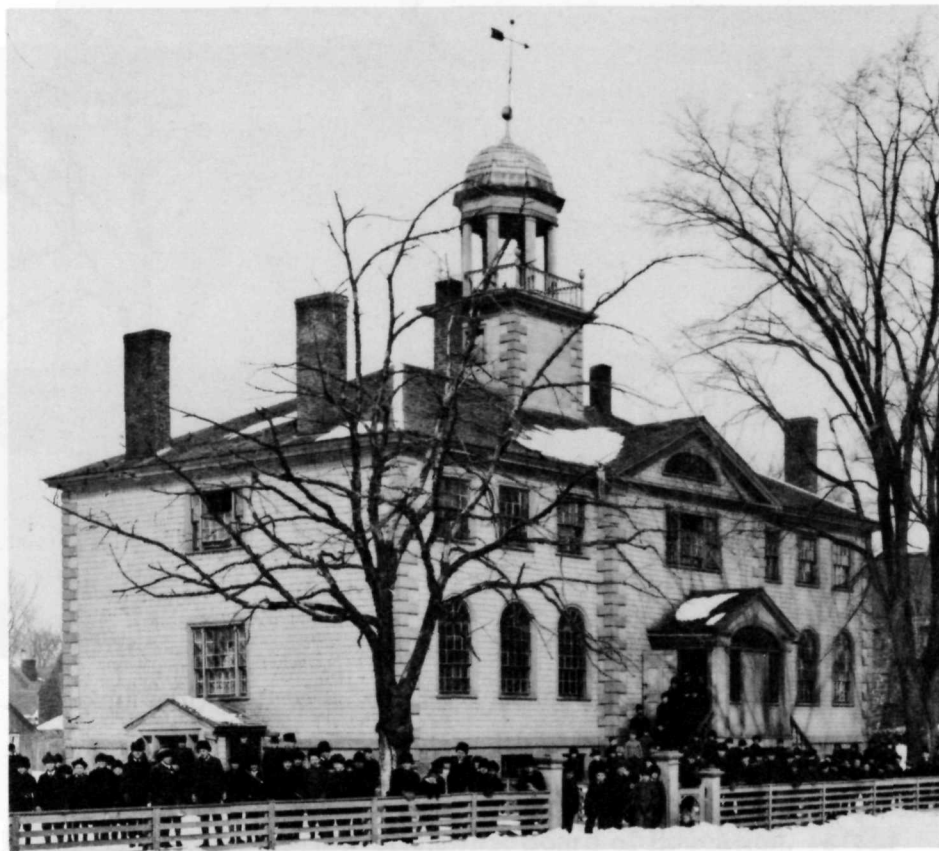


**Figure 10.** Wakem Corner School, N.B., now used for meetings of the local New Brunswick Women's Institute, date of construction unknown. (CIHB Phase 1, 1971.)

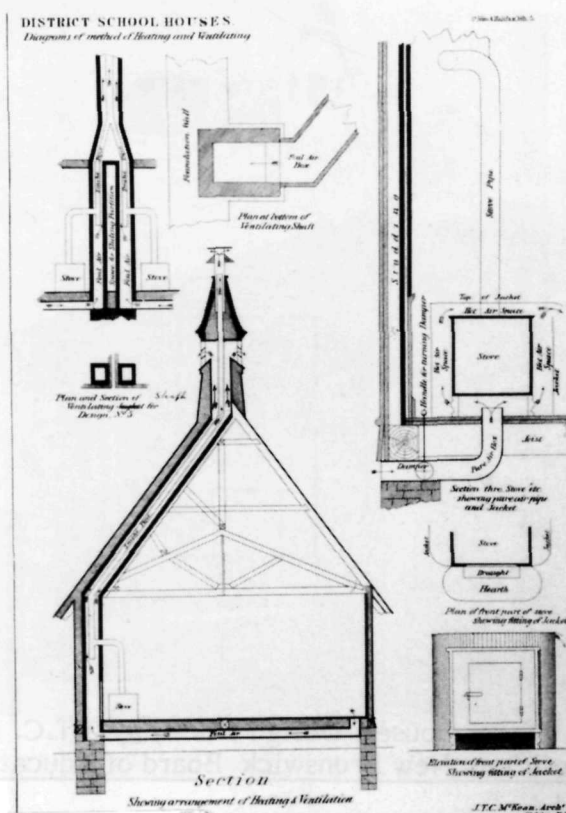


**Figure 11.** Dumpfries School, N.B., built between 1880 and 1910, as it appeared in 1910. (Postcard, n.p.)

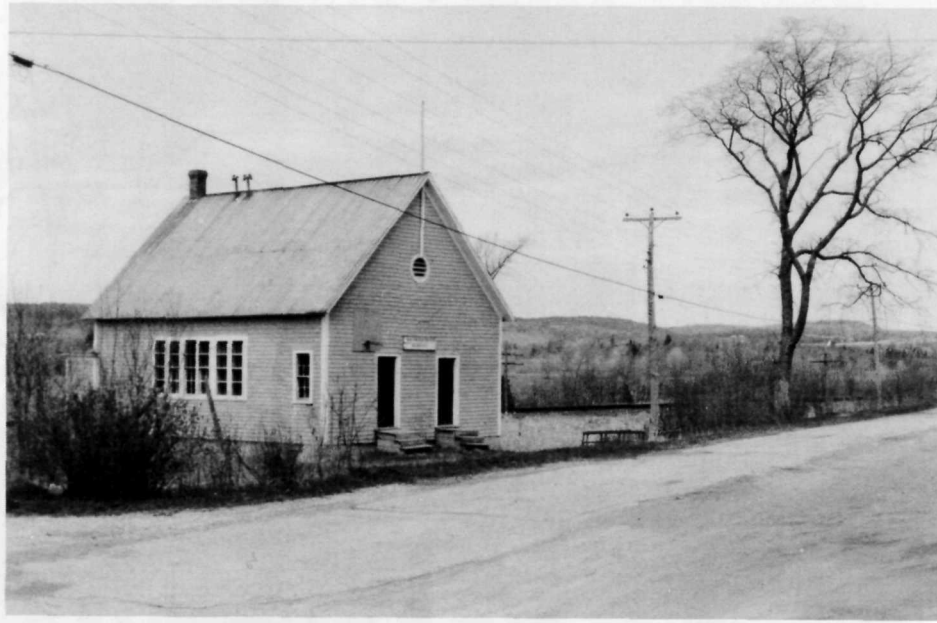
Figure 7. Chockpish School, Village Historique Acadien, Caraquet, N.B., interior view showing long benches and wood stove. (Village Historique Acadien.)



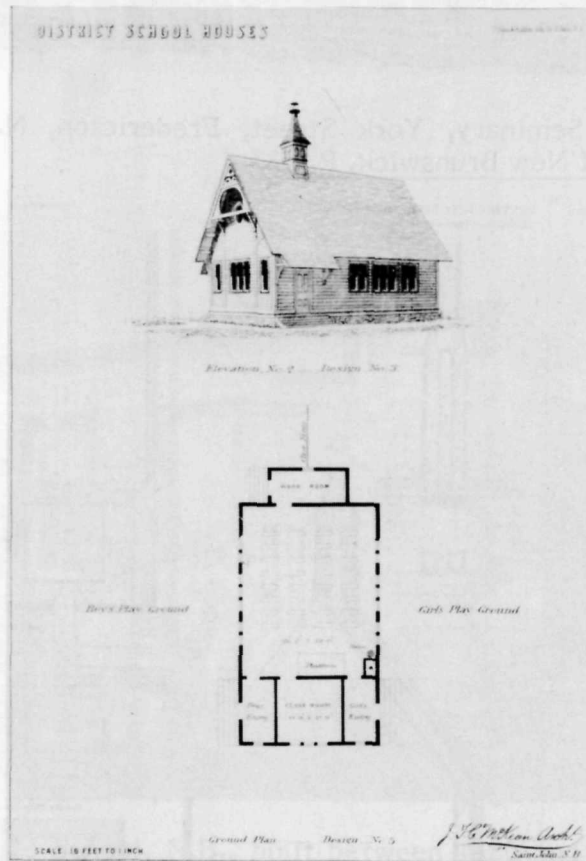
**Figure 12.** Baptist Seminary, York Street, Fredericton, N.B., opened in 1835. (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P 5/87.)



**Figure 13.** "Diagrams of method of Heating and Ventilating," prepared in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Education, 1872, by J.T.C. McKean. (Plans of School Houses [Fredericton: New Brunswick Board of Education, 1872].)

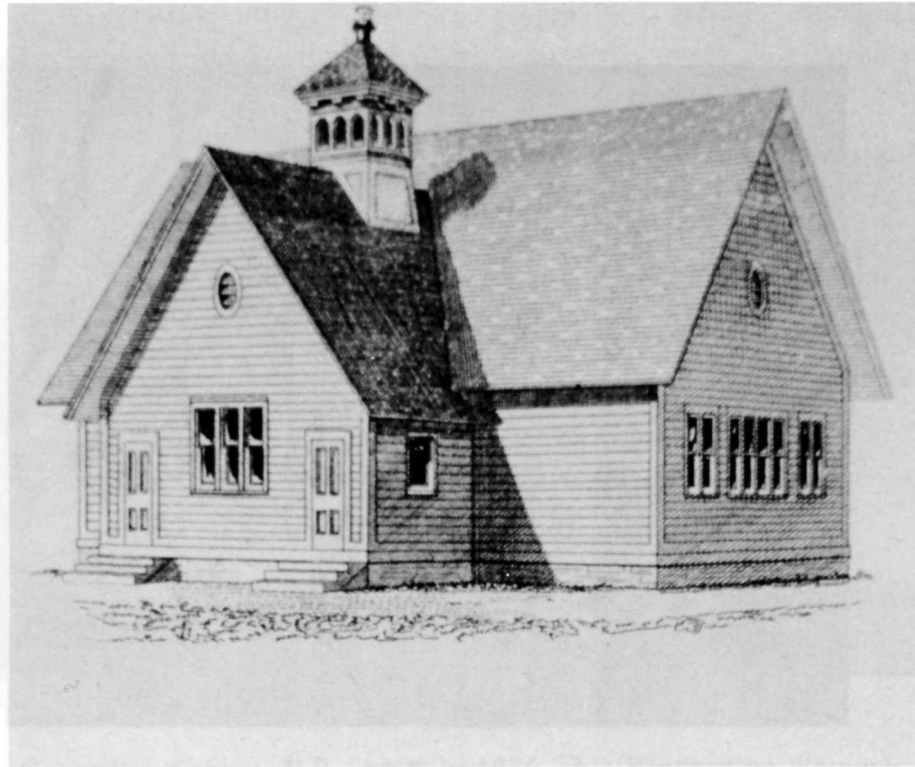


**Figure 14.** Nauwigewauk School, N.B., date of construction unknown. Note ventilating window in façade. (CIHB Phase 1, 1973.)



**Figure 15.** District School Houses: Design No. 2, by J.T.C. McKean, 1872. (Plans of School Houses [Fredericton: New Brunswick Board of Education, 1872].)





**Figure 16.** District School Houses: Design No. 5, by J.T.C. McKean, 1872. (Plans of School Houses [Fredericton: New Brunswick Board of Education, 1872].)



**Figure 17.** "The Old School Building and the New," Florenceville, N.B., 1905. (Annual Report of the Schools of New Brunswick, 1905-06 [Fredericton: (King's Printer), 1907], frontispiece.)



**Figure 18.** Long Reach School, Kingston Peninsula, N.B., built in 1898-99. (Ilse Holler.)



**Figure 19.** Enterprise camp heater consisting of a metal drum with cast ends, legs and attachment brackets, four brackets for a shelf on top, hearth plate and chimney sleeve. (One-Room School Collection, Historical Resources Administration, Fredericton, N.B., temporary legislation no. V354-5.)



**Figure 20.** Kincardine School, N.B., built in 1876-77. (Kincardine Women's Institute, N.B.)

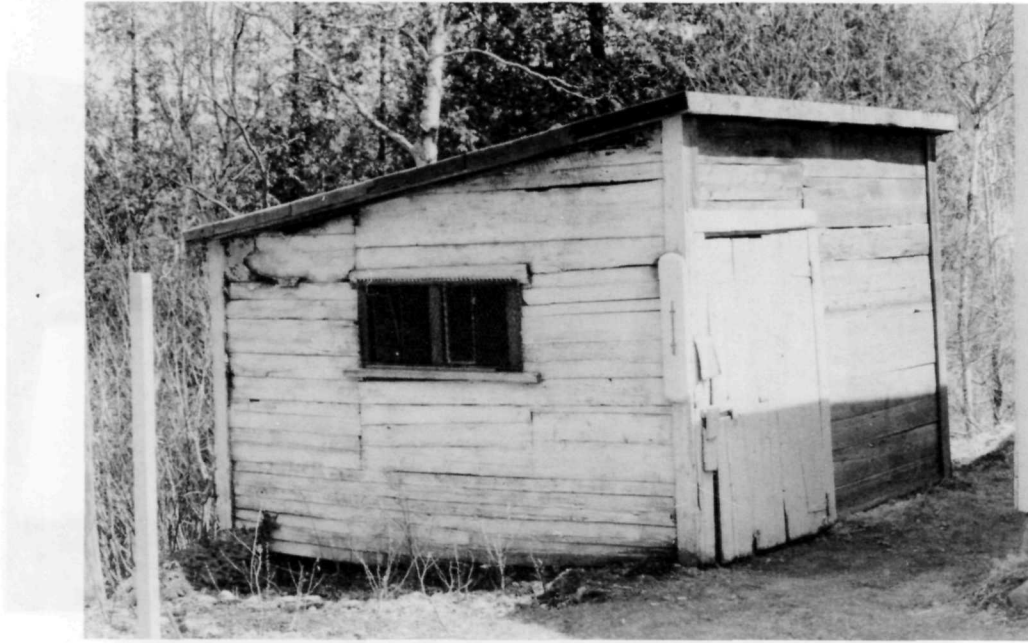


**Figure 21.** French Village School, N.B., with two privies situated at the back of the building and a woodshed to the left, dates of construction unknown. (CIHB Phase 1, 1973.)

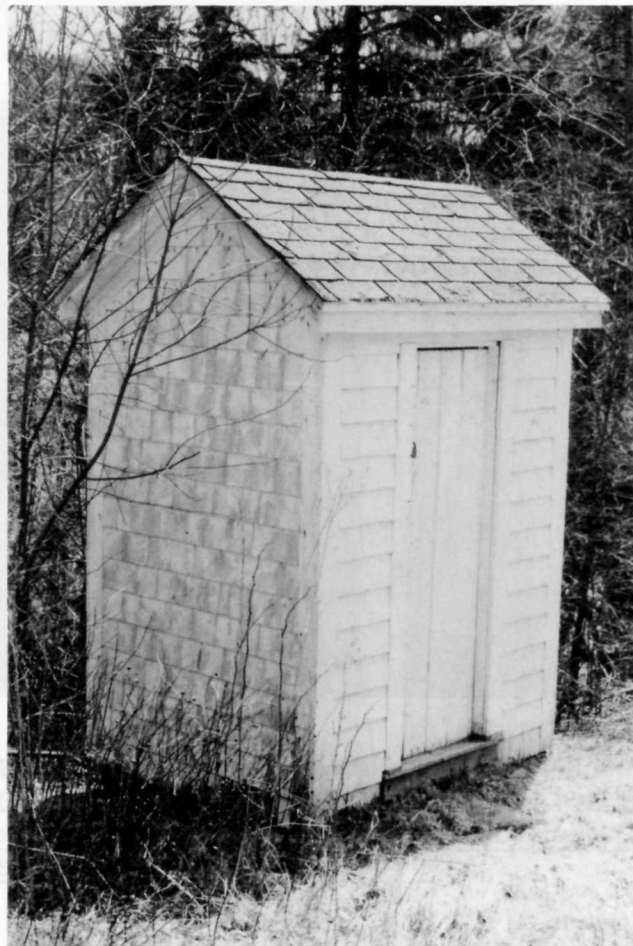
Figure 23. One of the two privies for the French Village School, N.B., date of construction unknown. (CIHB Phase 1, 1973.)

Figure 23. Charlotte Street School, 732 Charlotte Street, Fredericton, N.B., built in 1884-85. (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-327.)

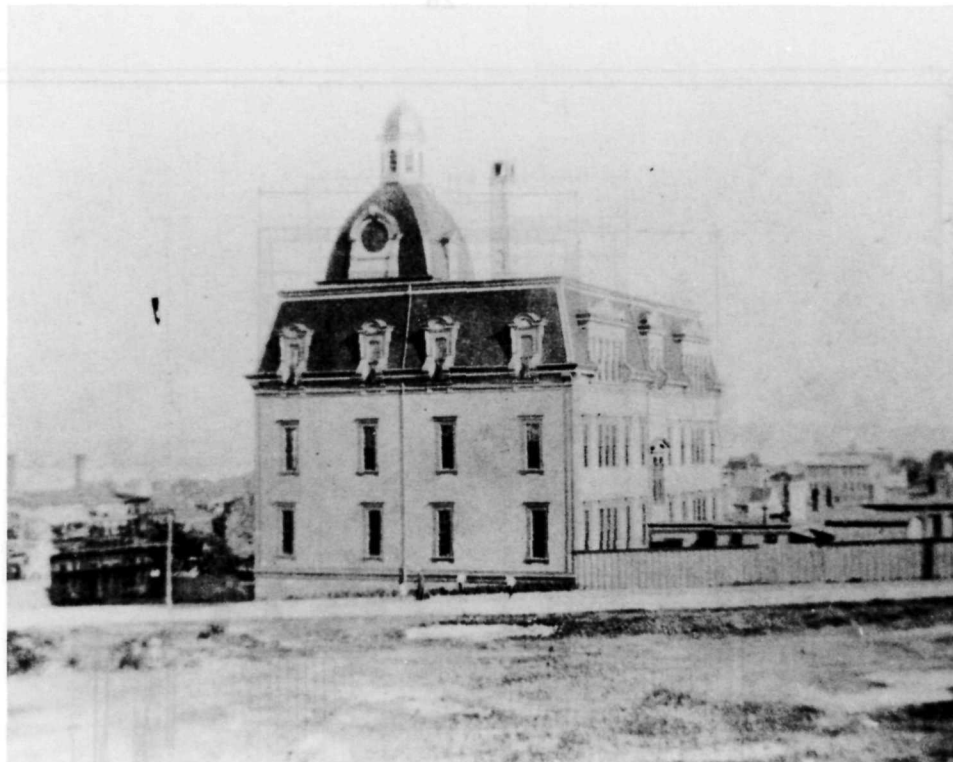




**Figure 22.** Woodshed for the French Village School, date of construction unknown. (CIHB Phase 1, 1973.)



**Figure 23.** One of the two privies for the French Village School, N.B., date of construction unknown. (CIHB Phase 1, 1973.)



**Figure 24.** Albert School House, West Saint John, N.B., built ca. 1876. (Telegraph Journal [Saint John], n.d.)

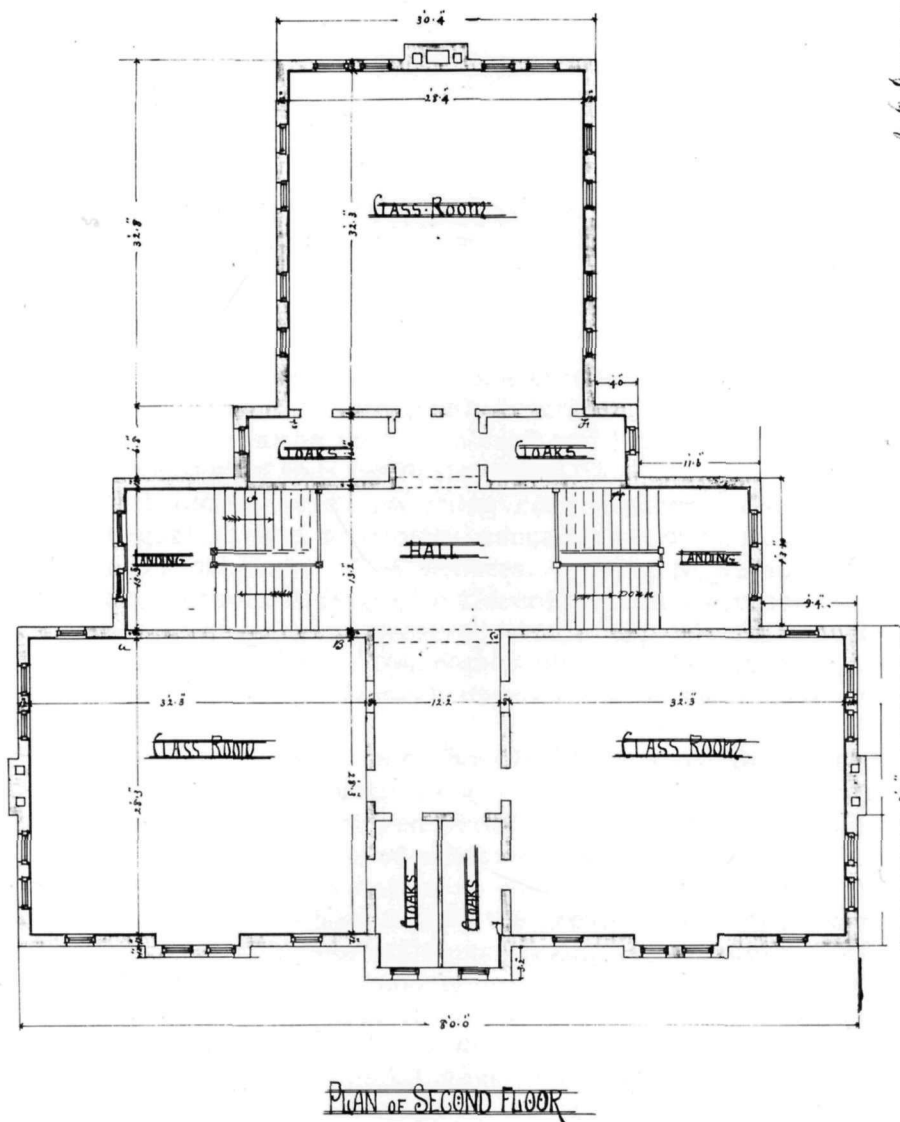


**Figure 25.** Charlotte Street School, 732 Charlotte Street, Fredericton, N.B., built in 1884-85. (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-327.)



**Figure 26.** Charlotte Street School, 732 Charlotte Street, Fredericton, N.B., built in 1884-85, plan of ground floor by Dumaresq & Mott, architects. (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, MC164/274.)





*J. A. Dumasq & Mott  
 Henry K. Mott  
 Fredericton, N.B. May 1884*

*John A. Dumasq*

**Figure 27.** Charlotte Street School, 732 Charlotte Street, Fredericton, N.B., built in 1884-85, plan of second floor by Dumasq & Mott, architects. (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, MC164/274.)

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