

have a school. The meeting to form the school district was held at the home of Philip Thomas in 1912. An overflow crowd attended. Mr. Thomas who had had experience in school matters, led the discussions. A committee was elected who, on the advice of Mr. Thomas, formed a district much bigger than the school act called for and named it Fisher School District No. 1555. A school was built and opened in 1913 with Mr. Neil, a settler, as the first teacher. However, later, as post offices were opened, mail destined for that school district would go to the Fisher River post office, so the name of the school district was changed to Maidstone.

Maidstone School was a one-room frame building. The interior had a rim of wainscoting four feet up from the floor. The remainder of the wall was wallboard. A large iron stove with a round metal cage around it, (a Waterbury heating system) which stood at the back of the room, provided the only heat during the winter months. However, the heat did not circulate well and the floor and the other end of the room was bitterly cold. The children's feet often froze as they did their lessons. Among the scant equipment in the school was a big wooden case of maps, a globe, and a small "library". The school had the usual two-seater desks which were shared with a classmate. These had their humorous side to them. Elizabeth (Libby) Mabb and her girlfriend were sitting behind two boys — one was Libby's cousin and the other was just another boy. When the cousin stood up and went to speak to the teacher, Libby thought that, just for a joke, she would stick her pen through onto his seat. When he sat down on the sharp point he leapt up almost to the ceiling. That was the end of Libby's sitting behind her cousin!

Attached to the school was a large kitchen with a cookstove where the children could warm things for lunch. Cups and a tea kettle were kept there to make cocoa or soup. A barn was also built, later, in the schoolyard to shelter the horses of those who rode to school.

During recess many of the children played ball, Aunty Over, Farmers in the Dell, and other games which are still played today. During the winter all of the pupils played snowballs and built snow houses. Often the older girls would just walk around the schoolyard and talk. Once Libby was playing a type of "circle game" when right in the middle of the game the tape which tied her underskirt came undone and the skirt fell down. Afraid that the others would think it was her drawers, she quickly grabbed it up and ran to the washroom where she hid all the time recess was on.

Mr. Tozer was the second teacher at the Maidstone School.

Miss Ellen Gudmundson, who followed him, was a young Icelandic woman who boarded at Giason's. She would often spend the weekends with the older Mabb girls. A very conscientious teacher, Miss Gudmundson taught the children sewing and other things such as embroidery, which was not expected of her. Libby Mabb, who was then thirteen years old, was making a sewing bag with her initials on it — "an awful mess". Every night when Libby went home, Miss Gudmundson would rip her work out and do it over for her. When Libby came back the next morning and looked at it she thought "Oh well, I'm not doing so bad after all." After Miss Gudmundson left, she married Alfred Peplar. However they were married only a few months when they came down with the Spanish flu. He died the day before Christmas and she died the day after Christmas.

One teacher was a returned soldier. He had been wounded in the head and had a silver plate in his skull. As his family lived in the Maritimes, he was lonely. His chief delight on weekends was getting a bottle of homebrew, which was not hard to do, and consoling himself. He did not get along with one of the trustees. One evening when he was walking past his place this fellow was working on the road. They had words and the trustee picked up a club and hit the teacher and "just about broke his leg." He tore his pants down the front. This incident caused quite a sensation around the neighbourhood. From then on, the teacher's life was a terror for fear of meeting the trustee. When the time came for the teacher to leave, he borrowed a neighbour's horse and rode to Broad Valley instead of to Fisher Branch to catch the train so he would not run the risk of meeting this trustee again. When he reached there he let the horse go and it came home by itself.

Mrs. Shields was an old teacher, quite past retirement age. The first morning she came to school she brought out a big double strap, a monstrous thing and thick. "You see this," she said, "and if you don't behave that's what you're going to get." To some of the pupils that was terrifying, but to others it was just a challenge. Some of the children would make rope snares for her and put them in the gateway. Then she would come shuffling along and catch her foot and down she would go. Poor old thing. In the middle of the term Mrs. Shields left Maidstone to the care of a younger teacher.

#### **MARBLE RIDGE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT** as told by George Hamrlik written by Marje Hamrlik

The first site for Marble Ridge School was on two acres of Sec. 22, N.W. ¼, T. 25, 1W. The land was donated by Andrew Truthwaite (Daddy). It was built