

Photo: The Morrow Girls at School, c. 1909

Aughagash School, Country Antrim, (Northern) Ireland

1st row (L-R, on ground):

Lizzie (Betty) Morrow, Sara Conly, Annie McMullan, Ellen Wilson.

2nd row (L-R, sitting):

Annie Wilson, Hessie Morrow, Annie McMullan, Aggie Simpson, M. Alexander, Martha Wilson

3rd row (L-R standing):

M. Simpson, Mary Conly, Margaret McFetridge, Mr. Samuel Coulter, Miss Maggie McNeill, Mary Morrow

(My family members, my great-aunties, are underlined.)

The two boys looking out the window are Willie Conly and James McMullan

School Principals:

(as listed on page 168 of “Townlands, People and Traditions” by Felix McKillop, 2006.)

- David Killen (1885-1900)
- Malcolm Templeton (1900-1906)
- Samuel Coulter (1906-1909)

The School

For more about the school building itself, see pages 165-168 of “Townlands, People and Traditions” by Felix McKillop, 2006. The school building in this picture was replaced in 1922, due to its small size and rotting supporting roof timber. The “new” school was closed in 1982. It was converted into a house and in 2006 was owned by Brian and Janice Devlin of Carnlough. There is supposed to be a plaque on the building indicating that it used to be a school.

Mary’s School Day Memories:

On July 6, 1979, when Mary was 84, her daughter Aileen Jackson recorded their conversation about Mary’s childhood, immigration to Canada and early married life. In speaking about her school days she said that Mr. Coulter was the principal and teacher of the school, and Miss Maggie McNeill, a dressmaker, would teach them to knit, sew and crochet. Although she was not a teacher, she did teach the youngest grade.

Mr. Coulter, in addition to teaching, was the choir conductor, although it wasn’t clear in Mary’s conversation if it was a school choir or a church choir.

In Mary's words:

"Maggie MacNeill.... She came into the school after. She wasn't a teacher. She was a dressmaker, I think, and she come in to teach the girls to sew, knit and crochet and then she took a small grade too, just the youngest grade. And they were all after this new teacher, you know. He wasn't married. They would even fight! The one would go and almost sit on each the other's knee to try to sit beside him. Even in church!

... Even in church! He was so disgusted with them

... Well Maggie MacNeill that went to the school she was awful! He had to come down past our place to go to school and so had she, but she'd go and she'd come in our place and look out the window and watch for him coming and then she'd walk to school with him. And then she started making him tea at school. Oh she did everything under the sun for him! <giggle> He didn't want her.

... He married Sherry's cousin."

Mary and her older sister Margaret (aka Peggy or Maggie), had a different teacher when they started school, David Killen.

In Mary's words:

"The first teacher when I went to school - Peggy had him - and the others had him and I had him - I don't know if Bob had him or not. I went to school very early, when I was 3 years old, they said. He was the next door neighbour to us - Killen - his mother lived there. His wife died, I think, his first wife - and then he married again. He had a very nice wife, but oh what a life she had with him! Real old drunkard, you know. He'd go to Larne in a horse and buggy and wouldn't come home and she'd be out there late at night looking, listening for him coming, you know. It was the old horse that brought him home, it wasn't him! ... Drunken blind - Oh, it was terrible. She had an awful life with him. So, there were some days he couldn't come to school, you see. And their sister lived with them too. What was her name? Peggy was the old lady, the mother. Oh gosh, I've forgotten the sister's name. Anyway she come down The Braid; we'd see her coming. We knew what was up. She'd say "There's no school today." We'll cheer, you know. Oh boy! It was wonderful. No school today. We'll go home. And that happened every once in a while 'til they finally took him off, fired him. That's when Templeton came..."

Religious instruction was at 9:00 in the morning for the Protestant kids; the Catholic kids would play outside until 9:30. There were 3 or 4 Catholic families in the area, but the Catholic school was too far for them to travel to. Mary thought it was a terrible thing that she had to sit in class while they got to play. She remembered having to memorize the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and could still recite it at age 84.

In Mary's words:

"We had a lot of Catholic friends in Ireland, you know. We played with them at school and they used to come and play with us and lots of friends. Sunday afternoon we used to watch across the river where we could see the Catholics hurling, what they called hurling. Some people say that they were batting at the Protestants' skull, and that's what the ball was. <giggle>"