

TANNERY SCHOOLHOUSE (S.S.# 9, Ramsay, Ontario)

Location: Lot 16, Concession 7, Ramsay Township, Lanark County, Ontario.

Present owners: Michael and Jean Macpherson

Present occupants: Michael and Jean Macpherson

Present use: Dwelling house

Statement of significance:

S.S. #9, Ramsay, remains much in its original style and character and is an example of early published rural schoolhouse designs. It is the only one-room school in Ramsay Township that is constructed of stone. Used as a school for 115 years, the structure has been a predominant focal point in the rural community.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. 1. The crown patent for 100 acres of Lot 16 was granted to John Mitchel in 1837. In 1842, John A. H. Powell, Sheriff, acted "to make a certain debt out of the sale of land and tenements of John Mitchell to satisfy Robert Mansell." Eighty pounds from Robert Mansell was the highest bid; thus he was deeded the 100 acres of land and premises. Robert Mansell sold to Thomas Mansell three years later in 1845. The property was willed to Catherine Mansell upon the death of Thomas in 1854. In the following years, the land was divided up and sold as smaller parcels. The Trustees of School Section # 9, Ramsay, paid fifteen pounds for a quarter acre plot where the schoolhouse was built. The property was owned by the school until 1971, when the Lanark County Board of Education sold for \$1,500 to Carol Laing who immediately sold to the present owners, Michael and Jean Macpherson.

2. Date of erection: 1856.

3. Architect: Unknown.

4. Alterations and Additions: In 1971 a decision was made to repair rather than rebuild the schoolhouse. Minutes of the February 7, 1871 meeting details the work which would maintain the original character and style. Outer aluminum windows were added in 1963.

After 1971, the interior was renovated to a private residence. With construction of a second floor, a skylight and windows in the gable ends were added. Once again care was taken to maintain the original character and style of the building's exterior.

B. HISTORICAL EVENTS OR PERSONS CONNECTED WITH THE STRUCTURE:

Some students from this school went on to become famous in such fields as medicine, law, education, and politics. Others who became farmers, home makers, and tradesmen were equally important to the development of the local community and to our country.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**A. General statement:**

1. The style of this stone schoolhouse was probably influenced by early published designs for one room rural schools. Typically it has three bay sides, the door located at the gable end with a window to each side, and a chimney at the back.
2. The structural condition is only fair since the front corners of the wall are sinking and displacing laterally causing cracks in the stone work.

B. Description of exterior:

1. This rectangular one-and-a-half storey building is three bays wide by three bays long.
2. The rubblestone foundation and retaining wall running lengthwise down the middle of the basement contains a three foot high crawl space.
3. Random rubblestone and large cornerstones in shades of beige form the walls. Above the level of the eaves, the gabled ends are constructed of upright tongue and grooved board with triangular battens and is painted a rust colour.
4. Masonry walls support the structural load. Two tie rods seen anchored on the sides of the building just below the eaves support the later force.
5. Porches: None.
6. There is a brick chimney on the peak at the back and a small metal chimney one-third of the way from the front facade.
7. a. Located in the centre bay of the front facade, there is only one door. It has a wide wooden surround, stone radiating voussoirs, and a transom light (three lights). Within a two-foot recess, the outer storm door with three large iron hinges and latch covers the inner two-panelled door. All wood is painted the rust colour.
b. Windows of the main floor are eight-over-eight double hung sash with wood surround and radiating voussoirs. Second floor windows added after 1971 are in sympathy with the structure.
8. a. The gabled roof surfaced with metal has plain eaves and cornice with a moulded frieze (two boards) at the gable facades.
b. Dormers: None.

C. Description of Interior: Much of the original wood remains: three layers of flooring, the ceiling in one room, and wainscoting that is now used for cupboards.

D. Site:

a. The schoolhouse, situated on about half an acre, faces northeast towards the concession road.

b. South east of the school is a log barn.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Greenhill, Ralph, Ken MacPherson, and Douglas Richardson, Ontario Towns, Toronto, 1974.

The School Minutes and Expenses for 1871 to 1965. handcopied by Janet Waddell, School secretary.

North Lanark Registry Office, Almonte

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION, S.S. No. 9, RAMSAY

S.S. No. 9, Ramsay, located on the eighth line of Ramsay Township, is recommended for designation for architectural reasons as it is an excellent example of a rural school building of the mid-nineteenth century and is unique in being the only stone schoolhouse in the Township. This rectangular one and a half storey building is typical in having three large windows on each side and a central door flanked by two large windows located on the front facade. The building was constructed in 1856 of local limestone, the walls being rubblestone anchored by two tie rods visible just below the eaves, and the corners being composed of large stones. The front entrance with its transom light, large wooden surround, and radiating voussoirs (wedge-shaped stones), the windows of the main floor which have six over six double hung sashes and radiating voissiors, and the gabled ends which are constructed of upright tongue and grooved board with triangular battens are all important in contributing to the school's exterior appearance. Although the schoolhouse is now a private dwelling, its main architectural features remain intact.

The historical importance of the building lies in the fact that it was in use as an educational facility for one hundred and fifteen years and also served as a meeting hall for the community of Leckie's Corners.