

# An Historical Sketch of the Arvida High School

by H. H. CALDER, School Principal

The history of the Arvida High School goes back to the year 1926. At that time the Aluminum Company of Canada, realizing the necessity of providing educational facilities for the children of its Protestant employees, opened the first Protestant school in a construction camp not far from the site of the present barber shop in the Vaudreuil section of the city. This school was attended by some forty-five pupils. The chief interest of many of these children was learning to speak English. The school was under the supervision of Miss Irene Kelley with Miss Copeland as assistant. The school was moved later to a house on the site formerly occupied by the Late Mr. Ernie Douglas.



PICTURE OF THE ARVIDA HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS TAKEN IN 1927. Front Row, left to right: F. McLeod, E. Ensley, G. McNutt, R. Willows, R. Dawson, Robert Morrison, Buddy Reid, John Beresford, H. Hurley, A. McNutt, R. Wyber, W. Henry, J. Eullock, Joe Van Damme, James Beresford, W. Whitaker, W. Beresford. 2nd row: W. McKee, C. Clark, B. Rowley, Eva Martin, N. Lethonen, B. Dawson, J. McKee, M. Hurley, M. Sale, M. DpBoe, E. Willows, E. Laquesne, M. McLeod, E.

Douglass. 3rd Row: R. Whitaker, R. Wake, E. Dearasaugh, M. Rawley, R. Morrison, H. Johanson, Teacher, J. Martin, P. Marinacci, J. John Van Damme, Anthony Marinacci, A. Morrison, G. Gale, R. Larsen. Those whom we have not been able to identify are supposed to be pupils from Chute-à-Caron. The picture was graciously lent to us by John Van Damme and Ralph Morrison identified it.

Previous to 1927, plans for a permanent school building were drawn up and approved by the Department of Education. During the month of August, 1927, a general meeting of ratepayers was called and the first Board of School Trustees of the City of Arvida was duly elected. The members of this first board were D. J. Wyber, J. Ward, and R. Read, with Percy Smith as Secretary-Treasurer. This board immediately assumed the responsibility of erecting a permanent school building and organizing a regularly constituted school. The school had until then been financed and operated entirely as a private school by the Company. During the year 1927-28 the school staff was composed of Mr. Harry Johansson, principal, Miss Kelley, assistant principal, and Mrs. Johansson, primary teacher.

In the year 1928-29, two new features were introduced into the school programme — domestic science and manual training. The Arvida school was one of the very few schools in the Province, off the Island of Montreal to offer these courses, and they have remained an important part of the school curriculum. The first class in manual training was taught by Mr. Johansson, while Mrs. Johansson taught the first classes in domestic science.

In the fall of the same year the first school opening was held when suitable prizes were presented for successful work in the previous

year. The pupils presented a short programme. This prize giving and school concert became an annual affair, and has been carried on ever since.

During the following years many improvements were made to the school grounds, such as landscaping, enlarging the playground area, and the erecting and maintenance by the pupils themselves of a skating rink at the rear of the school.

As time went on Arvida grew and the school accommodations became inadequate. Due to the untiring efforts of the late Mr. D. J. Wyber and the other members of the school Board Mr. John Ward and Mr. Matthew Finney, plans were drawn up to modernize and enlarge the school. In the summer of 1939 construction started and was completed by the early spring of 1940. Besides offering additional classroom space the following additional features were provided: a domestic science room properly equipped, an enlarged manual training room, a science laboratory, an assembly hall, a gymnasium, a locker room and showers. From 1927 to 1947 the enrollment has increased from 45 to 180, and the present facilities are taxed to the limit.

The school had been known as the "Arvida Intermediate School". Grades one to nine were taught, with special permission being granted to each Grade eleven and in the year 1944 the school was raised by the Department of Education to the

status of a high school, and has since been known as the "Arvida High School".

With the raising of the status of the school to that of a high school, the staff was increased. This increase in staff enabled the school authorities to offer in the school a wider range of subjects, notably, typing and shorthand, physics and chemistry, advanced mathematics. With this broad curriculum, pupils were enabled to complete high school courses leading to university matriculation in Science or Arts and into the business world.

The first High School Leaving Examinations to be written in the Arvida High School were written in June 1942. Since that time 69 candidates have sat for the examinations. All but eight were successful in obtaining their High School Leaving Certificate. Of the 65 who have graduated 33 have entered Canadian universities. 27 found employment with the Aluminum Company, 9 chose teaching as a profession while 8 became nurses.

The school has provided a sound educational foundation for many children whose parents have left the area before the children had reached high school age.

To-day a temporary honour roll hangs in the corridor of the school bearing testimony to the large number of former students who served in the armed forces during World War II, of whom several made the supreme sacrifice.

For many years the majority of pupils entering the school spoke only a foreign language. The Arvida High School has through the years built up a tradition of racial and religious tolerance.

Jews and Gentiles, Poles, Finns, Ukrainians and Czechs have entered its doors, and while they retain treasured elements of their culture, have become real Canadian citizens. May this ever be preserved as a proud tradition.

## Softball Players

Any men in the Ore Plants, Laboratories, Fluoride division, Metallurgical and Inspection group, Industrial Engineering, or Technical department who would like to play softball are invited to come out and play for the technical team.

Those interested should contact: W.E. Fullerton, Phone 4235 R.C. Quintenton, Phone 2260

WE NEED PLAYERS NOW — WE WELCOME SPECTATORS ALSO.

## In Memory of Simon Ross

On Sunday afternoon, the 29th June at 3:00 P.M., the citizens of Arvida will unveil a plaque to the memory of Simon Ross, the first settler to establish himself on a lot which today comprises our City. The plaque will be placed at the entrance of the courtyard between the Saguenay Inn and the Annex. The ceremonies will be presided by Reverend Cannon Victor Tremblay, President of the Saguenay Historical Society. This unveiling ceremony is part of the celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of Arvida.

The general public will be invited to attend this ceremony. Our readers may be interested to know about Arvida's first settler. We have asked our local historian Mr. J. A. Burgesse, Superintendent of Properties for Saguenay Power to outline for our readers, a short biographical sketch of Simon Ross.

Simon Ross, according to the Hudson's Bay Company records, in London, England, was a cooper by trade and he entered the service of the great fur Company in 1830. He was sent to Canada and served at York Factory in Hudson Bay. In the following year the Hudson's Bay Company acquired the lease of the King's Posts (Tadoussac, Chicoutimi, Metabetchouan, etc.) and despatched Chief Trader John McLeod for York Factory to the Saguenay in order to reorganize the fur trade in this district. With him came Simon Ross who was given charge of the Chicoutimi Post and later saw service at Tadoussac, Metabetchouan, Sept Iles and Pointe Bleue.

In 1847 a group of inhabitants of La Malbaie founded a society to colonize the as yet unsurveyed land to the west of the Township of Chicoutimi. Simon Ross, on learning of this addressed a petition to Lord Elgin setting forth as follows:

He was a native of Ross Shire in the Highlands of Scotland and had resided 18 years in Canada, 17 of which had been spent in the Saguenay, in Lake St. John and on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence.

He had married in the country and had a family of eight children.

At the expiry of the lease of the Hudson's Bay Company in the autumn of 1841, he had decided to remain in the country and had taken up a piece of land on the shore of the Saguenay above Chicoutimi where he had lived ever since, and had created buildings and cultivated the land.

Despite repeated requests he had been unable to obtain a title because the land had not yet been surveyed.

He was the first occupant and settler of this land and prayed His Lordship that his rights be respected and not included in the grant to the colonization society.

In the same year, 1847, Simon Ross, still an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, was transferred to the Post at Sept Iles and confided his land to Jean Gauthier dit Larouche, by a lease executed before maitres Thomas Fortin and John Kane, notaries. In the agreement mention is made of the buildings, circumstances and dependence which confirm what Ross set forth in his petition. The assertion that Ross was the first occupant and settler is also repeated. The land, however, is described as being situated on the south-west shore of the River Saguenay, beyond the limits of the Township of Chicoutimi.

It is apparent, therefore, that Simon Ross was the first occupant of the piece of land in question and that long before the region was surveyed. It now remains only to demonstrate that this land was the site of the City of Arvida.

The survey of the Township of Jonquière which adjoins that of Chicoutimi was undertaken in 1849 by François Tefu. Surveyors of unorganized territory were required to indicate on their plans the presence of settlers and that of François Tefu, which is deposited in the archives of the Department of Lands and Forests in Quebec, demonstrates that Simon Ross was in possession of a strip of land lying approximately between the Rivière Deschênes and the little stream which now discharges the Red Mud Lake. Furthermore, a letter written by the surveyor indicates that Simon Ross laid claim to all the land along this frontage between the Saguenay River and Range 111, Township Jonquière, which now embraces all the City of

## Regional News and Views

by Francis Coleman

An eye witness, or at least an armchair witness, to the accident near Île à la Peste Island in the St. Lawrence river when the S.S. "Scythia" bumped into things as well as more popular highways, was encountered by accident while strolling on the waterfront last week in Quebec, in the person of Mr. Wilson. Now with Alcan Sales Montreal, after spending last summer in Arvida, he was on his way to England for a three month tour when he heard and felt the jar which sent the 800 passengers back to Quebec. The ship was again since then however, and a newly married man, should well on his way by this time.

After interruptions of another kind, it now appears certain that Les Compagnons will make their first appearance in Arvida on Sunday June 29 closing the gala anniversary week and Arvida exhibition. This is Les Compagnons' own 15th anniversary, and the first complete tour of the St. John and Saguenay districts. The play is a version of Thornton Wilder's "The Skin of the Lion".

Twelve bands, at least, are expected for the regional band festival on 22 at Jonquière. At Kenogami a recent automobile accident had a concussion that one of the participants was thrown completely out of his vehicle, into a nearby house.

A story from Jonquière tells more about the S.P.C.A. needs of a natural phenomenon, fells of iron eating horse that nibbled the luggage case of a parked car. From the same city Adélard Lette's fish story was backed by a tape measure... A half hour struggle resulted in a record man manfully yanked from Saguenay's waters 36½ inches weighing 13 pounds... "Le Soleil" published a photo in Quebec showing no less than eight boats majestically at anchor at Portfred... "Le Progrès du Saguenay" Chicoutimi accused the new regional theatrical company Les Amis Tréteux of giving a poor even entertainment, advising them to tackle more proven works than Gauthier's "La Sacrifice". Jean Baptiste celebrations in Arvida will include the traditional bonfire on the eve of the 24th front of the Recreation Center, a parade on the following day between 7.00 and 9.00 P.M.... Mrs. D. son's Art classes at the Center drawing wide praise... At reasonable rate they are currently held Saturdays at 2.00 P.M.... "World champions" turned up in district wrestling... needless to say all different.

Jonquière paper suggests sidewalk should be suspended to make way for the bicycle traffic... The C. teau Frontenac's Terrace is challenged as a boardwalk by the intensity at least of the Jonquière bus terminal.

The three regional seats in the provincial elections of July 16 are all being defended by their existing National Union deputies: — Hon. Antonio Talbot Minister of Roads in Chicoutimi, Dr. Auger in Lake St. John county and Antonio Marcotte in Roberval.

Liberal opponents are not yet organized, but local papers give a trio of Antonios little serious position, particularly the popular Citizens of Roads. All Canadian citizens of 21 and over and residents of the province for at least two years are eligible for voters. Enumerators start their canvass June 16 until the 20th. "Canada Today" the Bank Montreal's interesting publication and other material issued by the Bank, now leading publicity hours recently at the American Banker's Association and through other research agencies. Some of the material is available at the local branch.

English listeners who sometimes mention the lack of English language programs on local stations cannot be musical if the week-end concerts on C.B.J. Chicoutimi are considered. Of special interest the Saturday afternoon series 2.00 P.M. of complete operas on recordings. This Saturday it's Donizetti's great comic masterpiece, "Don Pasquale."



The house which first served as a school for Protestant pupils. It eventually became the property of Mr. E. Douglas and now belongs to Mr. A. Daris.