

An 8-Page Project Including a Cover Page Featuring Photos, Stories and Activities

# *Memoirs of School Days at Ontario School for the Deaf 1945 – 1960*



This aerial view photo of OSD-SJW campus in Belleville, Ontario was taken from Flickr (Community Archives), Circa 1963

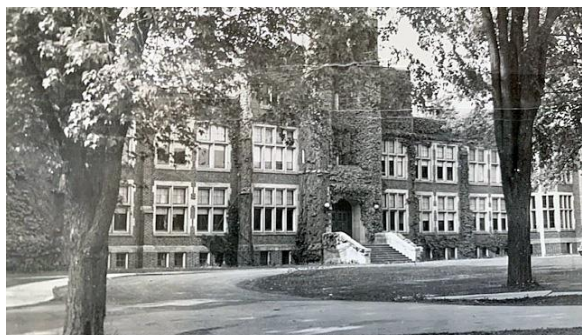
This Project is Created/Designed by Wayne Goulet, Class '68  
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## 1945-1960 OSD-SJW's Varieties of Classes, School Plays, and Events

Narrated by Donna (Roult) Wait '58 and Assisted by Bill Persall '68

in cooperation with

Gilbert Lillie '61, Gail Wiesblatt '64, Louise '64 and Stephen Reeve '58



This picture was taken in 1955, of the elegant OSD's 86-acre country yard surrounded by an idyllic landscape. It resembles Hogwarts with an array protective of maple trees and a majestic Victorian style school building. What a gorgeous sight to see!



Retirement Ceremony for Supt. W. J. Morrison (1935-53)

In Spring of 1953 at the School Assembly, selected students wish the OSD 7<sup>th</sup> Supt. W. J. Morrison & his wife, Louise a Happy Retirement and thank him for his devoted service.



Junior Class in 1948 celebrates a Birthday Party with laughs and sweet treats; Birthday Boy, Gerald Griffore is among, the others namely, L>R – M. Lawrence, Donna Roult, Marlene Caldwell, Diane Warlow, Anita Jackson, Miss Keller, Lyla Garnett, Barb Beaumont, Lillian Kluba, Harry Bell, and Betty Williams.



Library – Greater Knowledge of Learning

Miss Cass enjoys taking her Reading Class to the library, as she knows they usually pore over large books that are antiquated with earnest and imaginative notions. Nowadays, you use iPhone to browse information for quick accessibility.



Gratitude Speech: In early fall of 1950, Miss Catherine Ford got an honorable applause and thanks from students & teachers at her retirement event. She was a dedicated teacher and colleague for 42 amazing years. She began working at the school in 1908 and retired on August 31, 1950.



This highly sentimental program, Nov. 11 was held annually, which usually evoked memories among a lot of students as their family members were recently surviving through both WW1 and WW2.



Without fail, students gobble up highly nourishing meals with homemade bread and fresh milk. Was Sunday dinner the best of all? No wonder we keep eating; no time to sign to the others around the table.





#### May Day

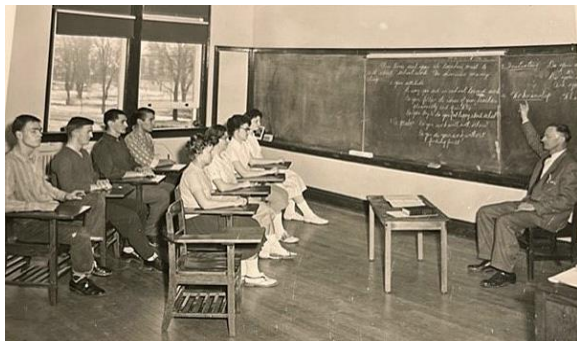
This is an annual and favourite spot for the whole school including the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in early May to pay homage to the Union Jack and also to recite, Long Live the King and later, the Queen in unison.

\*Note the Austrian pine tree in the background.



#### OSD Rhythm School Band

L>R – Ken Yates, Bruce Eynon, B. Gregory, Stephen Reeve, Larry Jakeman, Frank Stagg, Mary A. Oare, M. Gwalter, Billy O'Neill, B. Gonneau, M. Palmer, Beth Wright, G. Henshaw, Bruce Williams, Barb Beaumont, John Wright, Richard Salkay, and Faye Westbrook.



#### Guidance Class

Mr. Clare is giving good advice not to copy Elvis Presley's mannerisms like one leg wobbling while playing wildly with his guitar to his attentive class. Back Row: John Wright, Billy O'Neill, Eugene Fowler, and Jack Cyopeck. Front Row: June Braden, Mary Ann Oare, Lorna Gilders, and Annabelle Cronk.



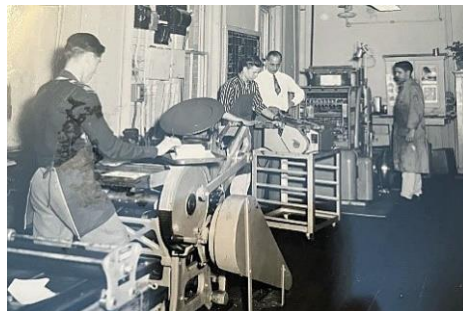
#### Typing Class

Mr. Chard makes good use of experimental training class for typing with his students. At front – Marlene Caldwell, Betty Williams, Doune Clary, and Diane Warlow. Back Row – Marilyn Lawrence, Lillian Kluba, Shirley Elliott, and Faye Westbrook for speed typing test while Nancy Moon and Donna Roults are training to run the mimeograph.



#### Beauty Culture Class

Copying the looks of Hollywood actresses, Betty Williams and Donna Roults, under the huge hairdryers, are watching Lyla Garnett practising a manicure. Marlene Caldwell is styling Marilyn Lawrence's hair.



#### OSD Print Shop (1958)

The main floor of Wood Hall erected in 1877 was occupied by the Print Shop from 1922 to 1964. Students from left to right are John Duggan, Gilbert Lillie, and Bryon Parliament training to operate offset presses under the instruction of Mr. Lea Morrison.



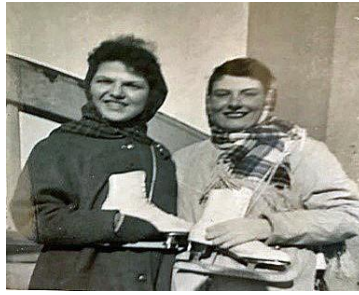
#### Students Were Flocking

The Grand Opening of the Snack Bar on December 7, 1956 in the basement of the Girls' Residence was very popular. Admirers at the counter are Diane Warlow, Lucy Kasm. Behind them, Isobel Thornicroft and Beverly Clayton.





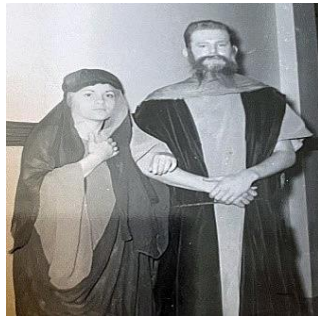
**Downtown Float - December 3, 1955**  
*The Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe* is one of the many that have demonstrated OSD's absolute creativity, shrewdness, unity, and imagination in public. This float is skillfully constructed with lots of wood supplies and other materials.



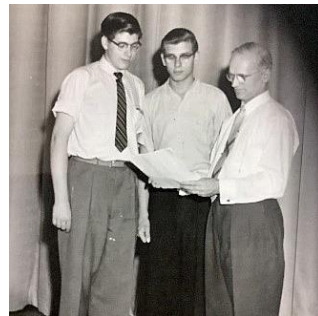
**Weekend Fun – February 1958**  
 Walking hurriedly toward downtown arena for ice skating, Donna Roul and Betty Williams stop at the ideal iconic Front Street Bridge to pose. This was the usual walking route across the bridge from school to church and back.



**Hallowe'en Costumes**  
 Proudly displaying their true talents in eerily-eyed fashion, student Marilyn Bishop (centre) is attired all over with brown, rusty red, and yellow leaves. On opposite sides, Marlene Caldwell and Betty Williams dress in the outfit of the Green Giant theme. Aren't they beautiful or spooky? Thur., October 31, 1957



**The Nativity Play –** This play is an annual all-time Christmas pageant performed by students to a packed auditorium of students and visitors. Bernice Spence acts as Mary while Gilbert Lillie as Joseph. This non-ASL play is adapted to and directed by Miss Helen Keeler and Mr. Alec Gordon. (December of 1960)



**Stage Managers**  
 During the spring concert of 1958, at the stage of the main auditorium, Mr. S. Alec Gordon (right) shows his true appreciation toward Harry Willson (left) and Stephen Reeve (middle) for their invaluable assistance as shrewd, talented and hard-working men.



**Snow White and 7 Dwarfs – April 1, 2, and 4, 1960**  
 This play tells that dwarves come home from their work as gold miners, and are startled to find the pretty princess soundly asleep on one of their beds. Later they stand calmly; bow their heads in solidarity toward Snow White in hope of seeing her eyes open soon. L>R – Dopey (Alex Brill), Sleepy (Bill Persall), Sneezy (Danny Wojcik), Doc (Arnold Lewis), Bashful (Oskar Sinn), Grumpy (Wayne Goulet), and Happy (Asko Martinen). Prince Charming (Billy O'Neill) consoles Snow White (Ruth Massicotte).



**Evelyn Caldwell's Birthday Party**  
 On a cold blustery day, at the front of the main building on December 2, 1946, Evelyn Caldwell in the centre celebrated 7<sup>th</sup> birthday a day later with her frolicking classmates and sister. Middle Row: Sharon Kilbreath, Bruce Eyron, Marlene Caldwell, Larry Jakeman. Back Row: Eugene LeBlanc, Stephen Reeve, Mary White, Kenneth Yates, Patsy Bishop, and Byron Parliament. Their exposure without coats or hats to the outdoor lasted only for 15 min. Brr! Come on! Smile! Be Happy!



**Christmas Pageantry**  
 As always, for the annual Christmas pageant, several students enjoy finding out who will be assigned roles such as shepherds, angels, wise men, or tax collectors. This time, December 1957. Standing: Richard Salkay, Herbert Alton (shepherds), Andre Bourget (Joseph), Diane Warlow & Doune Clary (angels), Donna Roul (Mary), Gerald Griffiore, Kenneth Yates, and Harold Bradley (Wise Men). Kneeling: Shepherds: John Wright, Jack Wales, Lynn Jarvis, Stephen Reeve, Andrew Dube, and Gerald Sullivan.



#### The Sewing Class

Taken in Winter of 1961, as part of the school community service, the Senior girls receive guidance and support from their sewing and dressmaking teacher, making uniforms for their basketball team. Front Row: L>R - Gwenda Andison, Gail Williamson, Carole Hale, Carol Ann Palmer, Angela Vecchioni. Back Row: L>R – Carolyn Cousins, Anne Todd, and Mrs. M. Vincent.



#### Woodworking Shop (around 1955)

The Woodworking Class, a long-tradition vocation, taught by Mr. H. R. Vaughan for years has provided those students (unnamed but worthy of our attention) with basic knowledge in making pieces of wood into their finished work of furniture ready for Open House display at the gymnasium. Their skills became a usual guide for work or enjoyment.



#### Boy Scout Troop – 1958-59

OSD Boy Scouts program was organized on Sept. 28, 1955.

Back Row: L>R – Rudy Lacis, Bill Conley, Adrian Ainsworth, Steve Chontos, Zenon Stus, Asst. Scout Master Mr. E. Vader, Rusty Clarke, Scout Master Mr. B. Williams, Peter Morden, Robert Gow, Bob Pensa, Clifton Carbin, and Gilbert Lillie.

Front Row: L>R – Jim Learmonth, Jack Clemen, Tom Marwood, David Carson, Peter Sicoli, Donald Russell, Paul Durand, and Geraldus Martens.



#### Girl Guide Company – 1958-59

OSD Girl Guides program was organized on Oct. 6, 1955.

FIRST ROW: L>R – Anne Todd, Gail Young, Sharon Duffin, Nancy Yull, Donna Burford, Gloria May, Marilyn Harrison, Shirley Doxtator, Lois Smith, Roberta Ferguson, Elaine Carlyle, SECOND ROW: L>R – Judy Ann Wilson, Barbara Caron, Ruth Guy, Mary Nicksy, Margaret Gregg, Gwenda Andison, Diane Chapeskie, Angela Hagen, Anita Villa, Raymonde LeBrun. THIRD ROW: L>R – Lieutenant Mrs. B. Ryan, Carol MacLeod, Susan Cooper, Judith Ewen, Jacqueline House, Joan Breivik, Gail Williamson, Carol Ann Palmer, Anne Tyo, Captain Miss W. Huffman. FOURTH ROW: L>R – Lieutenant Miss D. Wells, Jean Shaw, Louise Harley, June Pliszka, Beth Spark, Patsy Trask, Annabelle Cronk, Liliane Lortie, Margaret Morgan, Beatrice Brennan, and Lieutenant Miss A. Crabtree.

**Special Note:** In the fall of 1955, a **Brownie Pack**, a **Wolf Cub Pack**, a **Girl Guide Company**, and a **Boy Scout Troop** were established.

**Note:** Group Committee consists of Mr. J. G. Demeza, Superintendent; Mr. J. F. Wilson, Bursar; Mr. F. Harris, Housefather-in-charge; Mr. A. J. Clare, Guidance Teacher; and Mr. J. W. Hodgson, Vocational Teacher.



**Maple Tree Planting Ceremony**  
Taken at Front Lawn of OSD-SWJ Main School on May 15, 1964 for the Commonwealth and Citizenship Day. When the new flag was being dedicated, Scout Clifton Carbin, Class '66, holds the newly-planted maple tree up while Scout Wayne Goulet, Class '68 pours some dirt. Mr. G. R. Locklin (at the left side), Assistant Superintendent looks on.



## Perspectives – 1945-1960

Oh well, many of us wouldn't have been enrolled at the OSD, if not for Superintendent Morrison. The very person in charge of the OSD for a few years starting 1935 until the wartime years when the RCAF had to use our school for their training. During those turbulent times, like moving out and settling down, the school staff was busy seeking suitable lodgings in Belleville with a struggle to accommodate the needs of deaf students. Older students had to be sent to work at factories for the war effort. Even worse, those school people were yet surrounded by controversial calls to close the OSD or change its location.

Finally, in August 1944, the decision was made at the last minute to get the school to move back so that everything could start in earnest. One month later, I was admitted and now have become part of the evolving school history.

In moving back to OSD, Mr. W. J. Morrison was lucky to have even such a smaller group of dedicated teachers and employees wanting to teach us. Among those we have become familiar with later during the formative years, Mr. A. Gordon, for example, was one of those returning teachers who had enjoyed entertaining us through his expertise in directing school drama.

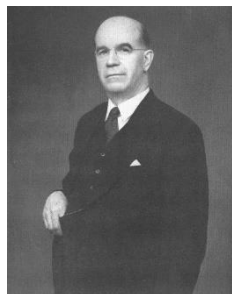
The following years were relatively calm, with the exception that the gym was officially approved and open for students to use in playing sports. As for the school, we understood clearly that we were expected to complete our 8<sup>th</sup> grade coursework or get some training from a chosen vocation before we could transition to graduation.

Prior to Mr. Morrison's well-prepared retirement in 1953, we became familiar with Mr. Demeza as assistant superintendent for three years when he learned his ropes to run the school better and efficiently. Also, he visited as many schools for the deaf in the USA and Britain, as he could, to learn all about teaching methods used largely with the deaf. When he became Superintendent, he then was able to receive a good amount of finances to pave the way for school improvement overall. The recreational programs were much expanded and the school curriculum even got better, thus being upgraded to Grade 10, a lot more advanced than most counterpart's ones in the USA.

In fact, with an ever-increasing enrollment at school, both Superintendents had really helped shape up the OSD and set it onto the right way for a brighter future. Yet, sadly, both of them had embraced and strictly enforced the policy of speech and speechreading, even at our expense for an obvious and strong need for the ASL to be used at school. Signing at the dorm, though, was permitted, not in classes. Through that unfriendly indoctrination, we instead were led to believe that we would hear and talk like normal. We didn't know that the school once had deaf teachers before. Yes, for many years to come, that had been our black eye. But we need to understand beforehand. There I beg to differ, as the most important but nagging question is:

*Did both superintendents intentionally enforce that ludicrous, not "keenly alive to impression" policy, in order to save our school from extinction or Doomsday Book?*

Donna Wait, Author  
B.A., M.A., Gallaudet University (1963, 1964)  
M.S., Hood College in Frederick, MD (1986)  
Careers: Teacher/Assistant Principal in 4 different states  
Minnesota, Maryland, Mississippi, and Virginia (1964 thru 2004)



William John Morrison  
b: 1883 d: 1967  
7th Superintendent  
1935-1953



Joseph George Demeza  
b: 1914 d: 2002  
8th Superintendent  
1953-1979



Donna Vera Roul  
b. 1939 – present  
OSD enrol.: Sept. 1944  
OSD grad.: June 1958



Stanley Alec Gordon  
b: 1905 d: 1989  
Teacher, Pianist, Drama  
1925-1964



### Royal Family Visit

On October 12, 1951, when Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth II) and Prince Philip arrived at the train station in Belleville surrounded by the flock of the enthusiasts from the Bay of Quinte district, Mayor Dr. Richard Potter of Belleville was presenting his city officials and visitors to the Royal Highness duet during the royal visit. Shortly, the Royal couple looked on to the cheerful OSD group with keen interest. And then waved at us with their warm smile.

Photo from Belleville Community Archives



### OSD-SJW Superintendent's House

It was an honour for a small group of girls including me to be invited for an afternoon tea by Louise Morrison, wife of OSD Superintendent, in Spring of 1953. We were asked to put on our best behaviour and not to bump into fragile china exhibited in the parlor. We could see some apple trees out of the big window on the right side. All too frequently, girl adults walked past this house to the Main School and back. In light of this century-old mansion, it was built in 1877.

In Courtesy of OSD-SJW Archives



### 1948 Aerial View of OSD-SJW Campus

What a pastoral view! Get a good look at the school campus full of trees not touched by the saw for lumber. Note the school farm where James "Jim" Clelland, a deaf farmer, used to tell us brief tales of his toil with dairy cows. And how fortunate we were to have such a great apple variety grown in the northwestern section of the school grounds. Notice the road across from the Main School Entrance Gate. That is main route, Dundas Street West, Hwy #2, the road most of our folks took long driving distances to come and visit us for special events. Located nearby on the right side is Albert College (not shown) where we took swimming lessons in non-heated water at night. Imagine! but are we disappointed? No! Longing for those good old times??

See the large spectacular playground on the left.

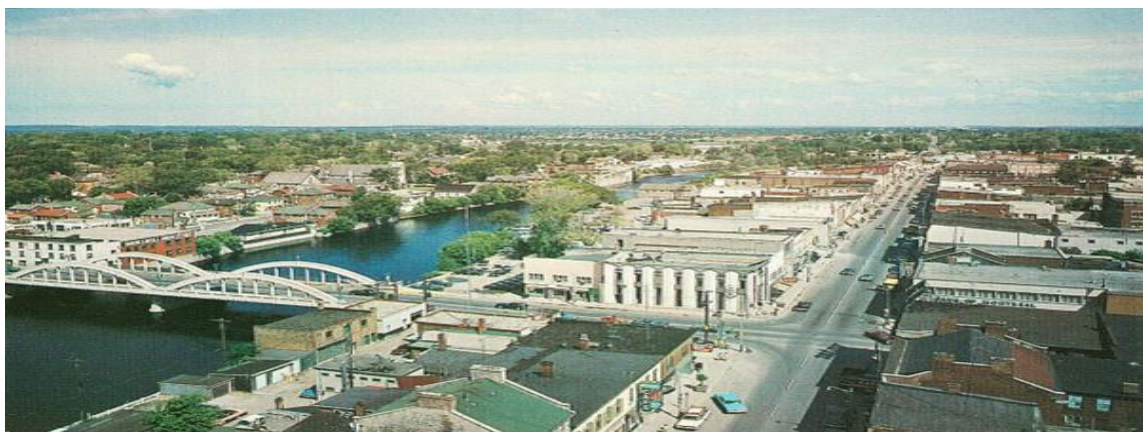




### The Unforgotten Pine Tree

When the new Ontario Institution for the Deaf and Dumb school was opened in 1870, there were no shade trees, no flowers, no green grass – only weeds and stones. In the next 10 years, planting of new evergreen and shade trees, and ornamentation of school grounds were executed. The Austrian pine tree found its place in the lower area of the oval lawn in front of the main school building. This evergreen flourished for nearly a century and was revered by many visitors and passersby alike for its symbolic beauty and simplicity. The best part was that it donned 500 colourful lights and put the lighted star on the top during the festive season. Believe it or not, its name frequently appeared in the school and city papers from 1927 to 1968. Sadly, for the last six years, the tree slowly deteriorated and passed away peacefully in the fall of 1972.

This stunning photo on the top right side was taken by the staff of the *Intelligencer* on November 26, 1968



### Belleville Chronological History

- 1650 – White voyagers call Quinte site “tranquil”
- 1665 – First white settlers/residents
- 1787 – First store operated in business
- 1789 – J. Taylor buys farmland in east of town
- 1790 – First industry – dam and lumbermill
- 1794 – First brick house
- 1804 – First wooden bridge across Moiré River
- 1816 – No. of townspeople living – 150
- 1850 – Population increased to 2,200
- 1868 – Ontario Business College founded
- 1870 – 8-men police force formed
- 1876 – First Library opened
- 1885 – First electrical pole lines erected
- 1901 – Street lights installed
- 1935 – Belleville population – 14, 500
- 1966 – Belleville population – 32, 400
- 1976 – Century Place – downtown opened

### Belleville – in French literally “beautiful town”

“Indigenous natives’ homeland in 1600s; first white voyagers in 1650s: Ontario Lieut. Governor named Belleville in 1816; Belleville became an official city in 1877”

For the vital and historic public interests about Belleville, the settlement was first called Singleton’s Creek after an early settler, George Singleton. Next it was called Meyers’ Creek after the prominent settler and industrialist, John Walden Meyers (1745-1821), one of the founders of Belleville. He built a sawmill and gristmill. Then, Colonial Administrator or Ontario Lieutenant Governor, Sir Francis Gore and his wife, Annabella, renamed Belleville in 1816 in her honour. In 1832 and afterward, a new grocery store, stores, and businesses blossomed.

At the rapid growth during the post 1950s OSD students enjoyed immensely hanging around in that city. On Saturdays, we took a fitness walk about two miles each way for movies, shopping and eating out. On Sundays, too, regardless of rain or snow, we lined up walking the same way to our own church. On both ways, at the big bridge, the roaring river was never a boring sight for our weary eyes. In our minds and souls, Belleville was such an exciting place to be.