

Maplewood Manor

Location: 13 Church Street, Seaforth, Ontario

Year built: 1867

THE FAÇADE OF THIS RETIREMENT residence still reflects the school it once was. The original rectangular school building was built in 1867, a year before the founding of the village of Seaforth. The south wing was added in 1872 and the north wing in 1874, giving the building its symmetrical “T” plan. The balanced front façade is distinguished by the gabled front projection with its three-storey projecting bay. A strong vertical axis is evident beginning at the double doors with high transom, the Palladian window of the second storey, and the louvered attic opening and pedimented roof of the third. The centre section is flanked by two further recessed sections each equally proportioned.



The original six-over-six windows of the lower storey were replaced by modern ones. The 2nd-storey windows are all round-headed six-over-six windows characteristic of the Italianate style of architecture popular in Canada West during the 1835-1870 period.

The building is set on a coursed fieldstone foundation with Flemish bond, buff (or white) brick walls. The brick was made locally at the Sproat's brickyard. At one time, the brick was painted barn red and ivy was planted to cover the walls and soften the colour.

The original 1867 school had two rooms. Archibald Dewar was the first principal. There were over 200 pupils. A growing school population necessitated the later additions to the building. By 1872 there were five teachers on staff. And, by 1874, there were 592 children of school age, making it necessary to add the extra wing and hire two

more teachers, making the total seven. Some time later, yet another addition made to the back of the building completed the eight-room school.



A view of the south side with the addition made in 1872.
Note the central front door.

The town's children of all ages were taught at the Seaforth Public School until 1879 when a secondary school was opened. A Separate School was built in 1902.

Kindergarten was introduced in 1910 with Miss Sarabel McLean as the teacher. She was the daughter of Murdo Y. McLean, the publisher of the *Huron Expositor* at the time.

Leonard McFaul was principal for 26 years from 1875 to 1901. Isabelle Campbell in *The Story of Seaforth* relates this story about him: "Leonard McFaul, the principal with the shining boots, laid a solid foundation and gave unstintingly of his time for 26 years. For many years he walked in daily two and a half miles through the winter storms and summer rains from his home in McKillop. Despite this long walk, no pupil ever saw his principal with dusty boots. Just as his boots showed something of his nature and his thoroughness, so did these qualities extend into his school work." Leonard McFaul was the original owner of the Lorne Villa Mansion.

When a new Seaforth Public School was opened in 1953, the old school building was used for other purposes. It was sold to Seaforth Shoes Ltd. Later, it remained empty for a time before being purchased and converted to its present use as Maplewood Manor Retirement Residence. In 1985, Maplewood Manor was designated as a heritage building.
