

S.S. No. 8
Sebastopol School
formerly USS No. 3 South Easthope / USS No. 13 East Zorra

Lot 21 Concession 4, South Easthope Township
northwest corner of Perth Road 107 and Perth Line 29
The site of the second and third Sebastopol Schools is now the
Educational Wing of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.



*S.S. No. 8 - Lemp Studio Collection
after 1878*



*Trinity Lutheran Church and S.S. No. 8
circa 1920. The two gentlemen in the
foreground are Wilfred and Dan Herman.*

Hope, faith and hard work. These are the words that guided the lives of the early pioneers. Many of the immigrants to South Easthope Township in the 1830s came from the central part of Germany. Most were Lutheran. In time they built a simple log hut that served as both church and school on the northwest corner of the then unnamed hamlet that is now Sebastopol. The land was granted by Andreas Wilker, the contracted and subsequent deeded owner of Lot 21 Concession 4.

South Easthope Township grew in population at a steady pace necessitating both a larger church and a larger school. In 1855 a Lutheran church of post-and-beam construction named St. Dreieinigkeits Gemeinde (now Trinity Evangelical Lutheran) was built to the west of the original log structure. In February of 1860 Andrew Wilker sold a portion of his land to the west of the church to the Trustees of School Section No. 3.

In those early years the school was officially known as USS No. 3 SEH / USS No. 13 EZ. USS stands for Union School Section, a designation given to schools that serviced more than one township or area. In this case it was South Easthope Township (SEH) and East Zorra Township (EZ).

There is a written account of a one-room yellow brick school built in 1860. While it would be reasonable to assume that a new school was built the same year that the property was acquired, no specific proof exists. That same account states that five years later a second room was added to form an L-shaped building accommodating a growing student population

from the Sebastopol area and the then-smaller village of Tavistock. There was a senior room and a junior room and one teacher for all eight grades. Again, no proof.

Time passed and once again a growing student population necessitated a new school building. This time there is proof. A story in the Beacon (Stratford newspaper) dated November 22, 1872 titled "School Opening" reads in part:

"A pleasant time was enjoyed in Sebastopol on Monday last on the occasion of the opening of the new school-house recently erected in that village for union school section No 3 South Easthope. The school-house is a handsome brick structure, erected on the site of the old school and will cost something like \$3,000. It does credit to the builder, Mr. Geo. Hildebrand of Stratford and also to Mr. Zoellner, the architect. It is undoubtedly one of the best rural schoolhouses in the county."

No mention is made whether the new school-house in 1872 was one room or two. A few years later, in 1876, the School Trustees purchased another small piece of property from Andrew Wilker's son, John. The intended use for this parcel of land is not known. Perhaps a second school room? Perhaps a playground area? Perhaps something else entirely?



Sebastopol School ... Lemp Studio Collection ... not dated

While Sebastopol had once been a bustling little hamlet Tavistock was now seen as the village with a bright future. A Beacon newspaper story dated July 7, 1878 about Tavistock reported "Already arrangements have been made for a commodious school. The one in Sebastopol is inadequate to accommodate the young or even fulfill the requirements of the law". Harsh words, indeed.

With the proverbial handwriting on the wall, ratepayers in South Easthope Township petitioned for a new school section to be created. USS No. 3 was dissolved and S.S. No. 8 was officially registered in 1879. The first trustees were George H. Kaufmann, John Gemmer and Leonard Schaefer. In 1880 some of the S.S. No. 8 pupils living in Tavistock transferred to the newly-built school in that village.

Enough of bricks and mortar and dates with or without proof. A school is so much more. A school is all about pupils and teachers and curriculum and recess and plans for the future and, years later, memories.

In the early years at Sebastopol School lessons were primarily in German with some English. For decades many pupils (as they were called back then) learned their first English words at school. For some English was only spoken at school, never at home. Over the years less and less German was taught and by 1915 classes were mainly in English. All eight grades were in one room with the second room used for games, activities and as a polling station at election time.

Of the many teachers at Sebastopol School perhaps the most beloved was Miss Katherine Kalbfleisch, known to her students as "Mother Teacher". Miss Kalbfleisch began her teaching career in September 1918 at S.S. No. 8.

It was a different world back then. An essay prepared by Tim Mosher, then a student at the University of Guelph, talks to the differences. Following are excerpts from Tim's essay. The complete and truly delightful story is available at the Tavistock & District Historical Society.

"Early on cold mornings Mrs. Gingerich, the caretaker, would light the big box stove to heat the main classroom. There was a slant-topped teacher's desk, a pump organ in the corner and great sheets of natural slate blackboards lining 2 walls. High up front was a framed portrait of King George V hanging opposite the big mechanical clock with its swinging pendulum. At the back, between the cloak rooms by the bell rope, was a small granite cistern of well water with a single drinking cup, and behind the school were 2 "two holers" (outdoor privies) for both pupils and teacher alike.

Most of the children would walk the long concessions year round with large metal lunch boxes under arm and often barefoot during fair weather. Just before 9 am Miss Kalbfleisch would swing the hand bell in an open doorway to have her pupils assemble from the schoolyard in 2 parallel lines: the girls in front of the east door, the boys at the west. Little Florence Berger would pump the organ and play a march as her schoolmates filed between the rows of cast iron and hardwood desks. Standing at attention 'God Save The King' would be sung, the Lord's Prayer recited and the pupils would then sit — 2 per desk.

Behind the school and between the 2 privies was a small ball diamond and the woodshed where games of 'Andy, Andy Over' would be played. Sometimes, during recess, the more daring older boys would sneak off the school property, run as fast as they could down to the corner to Feick's Hotel, walk into the barroom and buy a handful of licorice plugs. They'd eat the licorice on the way back to school unaware that their blackened lips spoke volumes. No one can recall the strap being used. However, for a time it's said to have been hidden by one of the boys high on the wall inside the clock. A milder form of punishment was to seat the culprit with the opposite sex.

The school week at SS # 8 under Miss Kalbfleisch ended at about 3 pm on Fridays. Slates would be washed, the room would begin to chill as the wood fire in the stove would cool and the hymn 'Abide With Me' was led by Mother Teacher, accompanied again by Florence on the organ. The 26 pupils of the 1920 form filed out of the classroom, empty lunch pails under arm but nary a textbook nor scribbler for, in those days, homework was unheard of."



Tim's essay and other accounts credit Miss Kalbfleisch with starting the "hot lunch" program adopted at rural elementary schools in Ontario. Using her grandmother's cauldron Miss Kalbfleisch made soup each day for her pupils using ingredients contributed by the parents. When the School Inspector was served a bowl of soup he was so impressed with the idea of a hot lunch that he asked Miss Kalbfleisch to speak to the Ontario Educational Association in Toronto in 1921.

Lemp Studio Collection photo of Miss Katherine Kalbfleisch (later Mrs. Gordon Ratz)

What is perhaps not as well known are the Home Gardens. The Courses of Study specified by the Ontario Department of Education included Elementary Agriculture and Horticulture. Each pupil was required to plant, tend and harvest a small plot at home growing items of their choice for which they would be marked. Florence Berger received a very good comment for her cabbages, beans and onions. Her schoolmate, Martha Schaefer, added asters and morning glories to her vegetable plot.

The Department of Education dictated how everything from recess to religious instruction would be handled. Not only were the duties of the teachers spelled out in great detail but so were the duties of the pupils. Students, as we know them now, were always and only called pupils and always referred to as "he" ... never "she" and certainly never "they".

Duties of Pupils. He shall be neat and clean in his person and habits, diligent in his studies, kind and courteous to his fellow pupils, obedient and respectful to the teachers and he shall submit to such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent.

As Tim noted in his essay the school day began with the singing of "God Save The King". All three verses were sung. Take special note of the wording in verse two.

God save our gracious King
Long live our noble king
God save the king?
Send him victorious
Happy and glorious
Long to reign over us
God save the king!

O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter our enemies
And make them fall:
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Thee our hopes we fix —
O save us all!

Thy choicest gifts in store
On him be pleased to pour;
Long may he reign!
May he defend our laws
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice
God save the king!

Years came and went with new pupils, new teachers, School Fairs, Christmas concerts and all the joys and memories of a one-room school. By the 1960s the SS rural schools were being closed in favour of district schools. Sebastopol School officially closed its doors in June of 1966. When school resumed in September students were bussed to Sprucedale Public School in Shakespeare.

The Sebastopol School land, building and contents were sold by auction in July of 1966. The new owner was Trinity Lutheran Church. Trinity Lutheran wanted the building because their

water supply came from the school well and because the church needed space for their overcrowded Sunday School. The school building was demolished in 1970 and a new wing was added to the church to address their needs.

To end on a happy note, in 1976 a school reunion was organized. Twenty-two pupils from the 1920 class enjoyed a delightful time with Miss Kalbfleisch (Mrs. Gordon Ratz). Mother Teacher, then 80, remembered all of their names.

The Tavistock & District Historical Society has a collection of material from all the schools in the area.

Specific to S.S. No. 8, Sebastopol School, we have articles, stories and photos as detailed in the list following. Some of the material was prepared by our Historical Society; some prepared by Tim Mosher, a Tavistock student at the University of Guelph in 1993; and some donated by former S.S. No. 8 pupils. Excerpts from the Beacon (Stratford newspaper) were sourced at the Stratford-Perth Archives. Similarly, the Daily Registers (attendance records) were sourced at the Stratford-Perth Archives which has several on file.

- 1) photo 1899 with names
- 2) photo circa early 1900 no names
- 3) photo 1905 with names
- 4) photo 1910 with names
- 5) photo 1915 with names - exterior
- 6) photo 1915 with names - interior
- 7) photo 1920 with names
- 8) 1920 class reunion photo 1978 with names
- 9) photo circa 1925 with some names
- 10) photo 1938 with names
- 11) photo 1940 with names
- 12) photo 1942 with names
- 13) photo 1945 - 46 ... finalists in the public school oratorical competition
- 14) photo 1945-46 ... Sebastopol school softball team
- 15) school exterior and interior circa late 1960s
- 16) pen and ink drawing of the schoolhouse by Tim Mosher
- 17) story "The Changing Scene" by Carl J. Seltzer
- 18) Daily Register pre-printed pages from 1918
- 19) Daily Register attendance page from 1920
- 20) "Sebastopol School, SS # 8" ... University of Guelph essay by Tim Mosher - 1993
- 21) newspaper clipping with photo 1966 with names from school auction day

We've included a few photos from our collection here. If you would like to see any or all of the material please call one of the telephone numbers in Contacts in this website to make an appointment to visit the museum / archives. The Historical Society would be very appreciative of any material you may wish to donate or loan related to our local schools and any information you can offer to help date or name records that are incomplete..



ALLAN PORTRAIT CO. - STRATFORD

S.S. No. 8, South Easthope School, 1899

This photo of S.S. No. 8 South Easthope School at Sebastopol in 1899 was published in the Dec. 8th, 1999 edition of The Gazette with no names available. through the courtesy of Mrs. Millis (Annie) Leis the following names were provided from a picture she said came to her from Bob Krug from the Herman sale.

Left to right, front row: Charlie Yausie, Dan Herman, Emile Heinbuch, Willie Berg,

Arthur Foerster, Tom Preiss, Henry Gerhardt, George Herman, Willie Leonhardt, Bill Heinbuch, Willie Herman, Mose Steinman. Second row -Maggie MacCormack, Sarah Bender, Ida Schaefer, Flora Herman, Emma Heinbuch, Martha Kalbfleisch, Amelia Preiss, Lucy Mogk, _____, _____, Clara MacCormack, _____, Johnny Roth, Oscar Yausie. Third row -

Henry Schwartzentruber, Annie Hoeltscher, Lydia Semmler, Emma Weitzel, Annie Bender, Emma Foerster, Lizzie Mangel, Veit twins - Agnes and Dora, Clara Klapp, teacher. Back row - Henry Heinbuch, Ezra Kalbfleisch, Henry Hoeltscher, Henry Preiss, Alvin Herman, Dan Yausie, Charlie Weitzel, Christ Habel, Erhardt Veit, _____, _____, and Wilson Weicker.

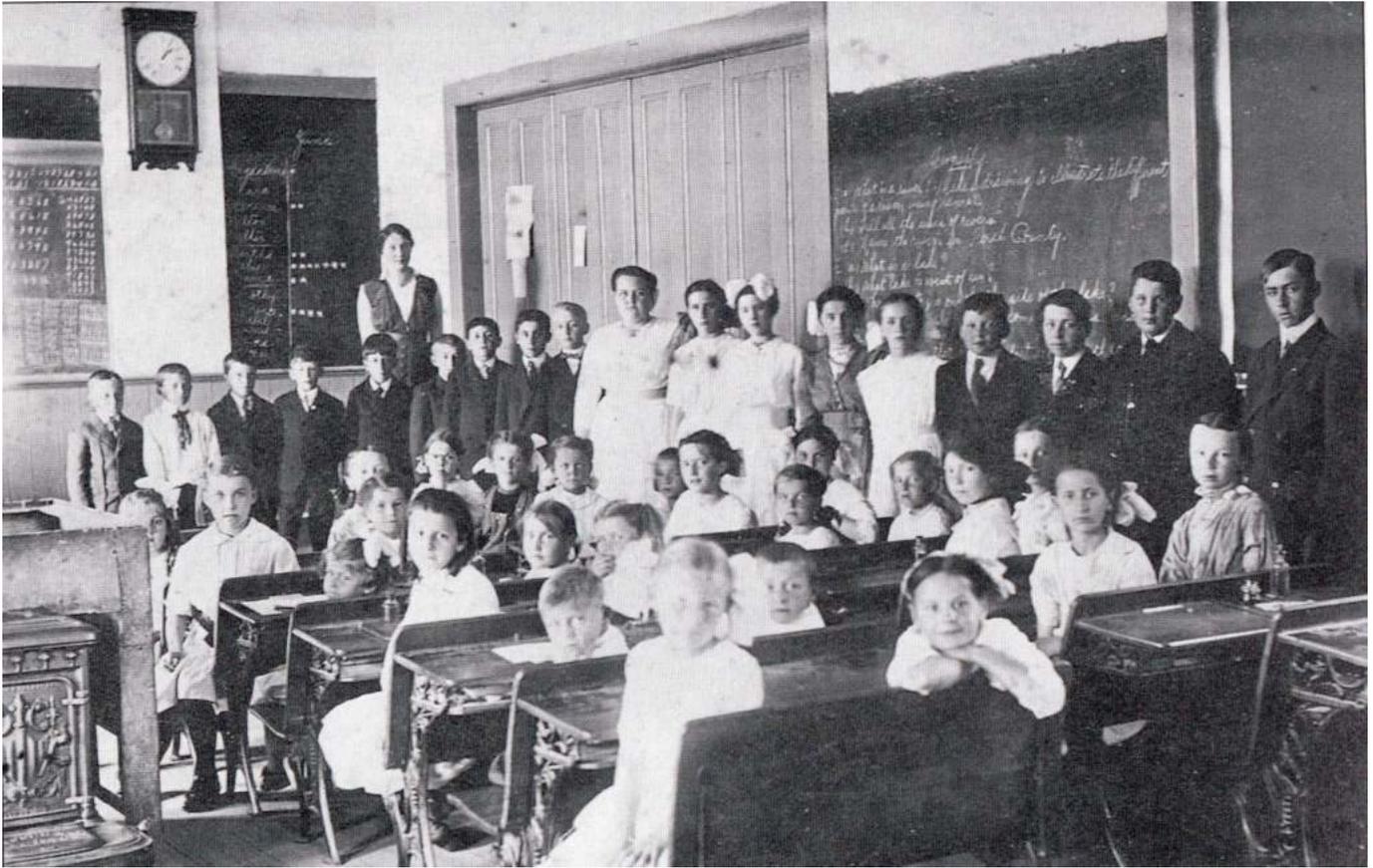


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
STRATFORD-PERTH ARCHIVES
Pictured here is the class of
1910 from S. S. No. 8.

Front row from left:
Oscar Wettlaufer, Fred Loth,
Robert Kube, Henry Feick,
Harvey Steinmann, Walter Vogt,
John Wagler, Irvin Loeb sack,
Ernie Piehl, Milton Berger,
Walter Feick.

Middle row, from left:
Milton Feick, Barb Streicher,
Annie Herman, Nancy Wagler,
Gladys Loeb sack, Jessie Piehl,
Martha Kube, Carrie Herman,
Emma Steinmann, Mary Ann Erb,
Mary Herman, John Falk.

Back row from left:
Fred Heinbuch, Henry Herman,
Wiif Herman, Edgar Loeb sack,
Alma Kaufman, Erma Loth,
Florence Kube, Edna Yungblut,
Erna Winhold, Emma Falk, and
teacher Mary McDonald.



Sebastopol School - 1915
Teacher - Evelyn Fraser

Standing from left: Wilfred Vogt, Walter Feick, Clarence Erb, Milt Berger, Ernie Talman, Henry Reick, John Hoelcher, Walter Vogt, Ernest Piehl, Emma Falk, Anne Herman, Carrie Herman, Lavina Erb, Gladys Loeb sack, Harvey Steinman, Herbert Patience, John Falk, Irvin Loeb sack

Sitting from left: Dorothy Leinweber, Ida Kipfer, Marie Feick, Magdaline Streicher, Florence Berger, Martha Vogt, Rosline Hill, Emma Lichti, Viola Herman, Oscar Feick, Laura Kipfer, Rheata Mogr, Mabel Piehl (foreground), Clara Wettlaufer, Sarah Erb, Oscar Feick, Kathy Kipfer, Mary Hartung, Anne Feick, Martha Schaefer (foreground), Ida Seltzer, Jessie Piehl, Mary Herman, Barbara Streicher



S. S. # 8 SOUTH EASTHOPE

1938

TEACHER – ROBERT CAWTHORPE

Back Row-L-R: Fred Kipfer, Harold Vogt, Isabel Dewberry, Robert Cawthorpe

Third Row – Laurene Bast, Harold Vogel, Delford Gerber, Robert Dewberry

Second Row – Emmalene Gerber, Doris Schaefer, Violet Dewberry, Jean Heinbuch,
Margaret Vogel

First Row – Edward Vogt, Bill Vogel, Willis Kaufmann, Carl Vogel

S.S. # 8, Sebastopol - Spring 1940



Teacher-Dorothy Wilker Schaefer

Back Row-Left to Right: Reginald Bender, Emmalene (Gerber) Bell, Violet(Dewberry) Wettlaufer, Laurene (Bast) Zehr, *Frances Bender

Second Row-Left to Right: Elaine Baechler, Donald Wagner, *Shirley (Erb) Marlou, Audrey (Bast) Steinman, Geoline (Brenneman) Bender, Jean (Heinbuch) Brown, Mary (Mohr) Eby

First Row-Left to Right: Bruce Brenneman, Leonard Wettlaufer, *Wellington Bundscho, Walter Gerber, *Glen Bast, Bernice (Yausie) Ramseyer, Jean (Herman) Pallister *Lester Brenneman, Faye Baecheler, *Burton Wagner, Pearl Bundscho, *Glen Wagner

***deceased**



S. S. # 8, South Easthope – 1942

Teacher – Helen Rudy

Back Row – Glen Bast, Mary Mohr, Alice Ische, Laurene Bast, Geoline Brenneman,
Jean Heinbuch, Audrey Bast

Middle Row – Shirley Erb, Jean Herman, Faye Baechler, Pearl Bundscho, Delores Ische,
Bernice Yause, Iris Herman, Elaine Schmidt, Doris Streicher

Front Row – Wellington Bundscho, Leonard Wettlaufer, Lester Brenneman, Glenn Wagner,
Donald Wagner, Burton Wagner, Bruce Brenneman, Walter Gerber



S.S. No. 8 South Easthope Class of 1920

Above is the original photo of the 1920 class of Mrs. Ratz which includes many of the former students who attended the reunion on Sunday. Back row, left to right; Rheta Mohr, Florence Berger, Dorothy Leinweber, Viola Herman, Clara Wettlaufer, Miss Kathryn Kalb-

fleisch, Henry Gingerich, Wilfred Vogt and Hartman Gingerich; 2nd row, Frieda Neeb, Erma Schaefer, Ruth Stockman, Marie Feick, Ruby Sch-

aefer, Winnifred Wettlaufer, Ida Wettlaufer, Edna Wettlaufer, Janet Mohr and Inga Stockman; front row Elton Schaefer, Helmuth Stockman, Elton Erb,

Curtis Erb, Elmer Streicher, Clarence Neeb, Clarence Wagner and Oscar Feick.



Students of Mrs. Ratz Hold Reunion

Sunday afternoon, July 2nd, 1978, school pupils of S.S. No. 8, South Easthope Township, Sebastopol, gathered at the home of Mrs. Ruby Burrows at 93 Dawson Street, Stratford.

Everyone present was a former pupil of Mrs. Kathryn (Kalbfleisch) Ratz, who was

overwhelmed by the turnout of her former students at the reunion. During the afternoon, each person had a chance to reminisce on what they remembered about their school days. A dinner was enjoyed and fellowship was the main idea of the reunion.

Shown above are the pupils, with Mrs. Ratz sitting in front of the group; back row, left to right; Wilfred J. Bender, Elmer Streicher, Ken Schwantz, Clarence Neeb, Winnifred Krueger, Clara Wettlaufer, Frieda Neeb, Olga Goertzen, Wallace J. Bender, Mabel Cook and

Hartman Gingerich; front row, left to right, Clarence F. Wagner, Florence Sippel, Lillian Sage, Mrs. Aaron Stere, Violet Klein, Irma Darroch, Ruby Burrows, Garnett Dell, Martha Loeb sack, Viola Schlotzhauer and William Scholl.



CALLS NO MORE — For many years, this bell at SS 8 South Easthope township called students to school. It will ring no more. It was sold, along with the school and two other South Easthope schools at auction sales, Saturday. Inspecting the bell are Miss Helen Rudy, Tavistock, a former teacher at the school, and, from left, Judy Zehr and Debbie Zehr, former pupils, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Chris O. Zehr, Sebastopol.

newspaper clipping July 1966 - possibly Stratford Beacon Herald