

## ERNEST LOUIS TIVY, a Kind and Generous Man

### The First Principal of Hearst Public School by Ernie Bies

Ernest Louis Tivy began teaching at the Hearst Public School in 1928 in the old Union School House. He was hired by Harry J.



Nichols who served as school secretary from 1923 to 1941. A second teacher, Florence Nancekieville,



was added to the staff in 1930 and Louis was appointed as the first Principal. The school now took over two classrooms in the Orange Hall which was adjacent to the school

property, just beyond the skating rink. Tivy left Hearst in 1933 but remained in the North as he taught in Cochrane's Central School from 1935 to 1945. In Cochrane he married a fellow teacher, Verna McGregor, who had joined the staff in 1941. They had no children.



One of his students in Hearst, Ivan Robinson, remembers him and other teachers from the 1930s in the following letter to the author dated July 16, 2010:

*“Hi Ernie; I remember Mr. Tivy! He had a bit of a limp & carried one shoulder lower than the other. (We didn't know why) He was a fine example of an outstanding teacher & a fair even-handed disciplinarian. I have to add that because he once had to give me my one and only strapping. I had pushed a class mate (Jean Nicholson) off a teeter totter in some kind of altercation & Miss Nancekieville, our teacher, arranged to have me go over to the senior school at the end of the day for my just desserts. After the administration of punishment I said I was sorry I had to come over to see him & he then shook my hand & said he was*

*even sorrier that he had to administer it & hoped he would never have call to do it again. I think that's the first time I can remember a man shaking hands with me. I remember him as always wearing a nice grey suit & black polished shoes. A fine role model for any young man.*

*He was followed, if my memory serves me correctly, by Mr. Mancil Napper from 1933 to 1936. He of the terrible temper who took it out on his students to a brutal degree. I don't know how he lasted as long as he did. Fortunately I wasn't on the receiving end of any of his outbursts but I certainly witnessed enough of them.*

*Mr. James Parkhill (on left) came next as our new principal. I would place him at the very top of the pile of all the teachers or professors that I ever had. He had the ability to make any subject not only easy but enjoyable. Personally he was able to handle multi-classes in one room with easy, even & fair discipline. All the students liked him. I don't understand why I didn't see anything about him in our Hearst book. I suppose that most contributors were*



*later students than myself and would not have had the pleasure of having him as their teacher. He, his wife Florence and their two sons, Gary (about 5) and Jimmy (about 2), lived across Prince St from the West's & Geo Banks. This would be around 1936 or 1937. I believe he was there for 2 yrs and was followed by Mr. Frank Washington (on right) in 1938.*



*I would be interested in hearing any more info on Mr. Parkhill if anyone ever comes up with anything. He called me once when I was practicing in Toronto in about 1956 or 57. He was living in Bowmanville at the time & I could not persuade him to pay us a visit.*

*Thanks again Ernie for the "heads up" on Mr. Tivy. All the best Robbie."*



Ivan "Robbie" Robinson 1938 and 1940

Harry Nichols and some of the other staff and students from the 1930s. Ruby Reid with Reid Sprickerhoff and



Martin Stolz, Una Harris, Irene Baird, Lyla Graham with Barbara Nichols and Katy Terefenko. Teachers Donald Elmslie and Mr. W. E. Bradley are not shown.

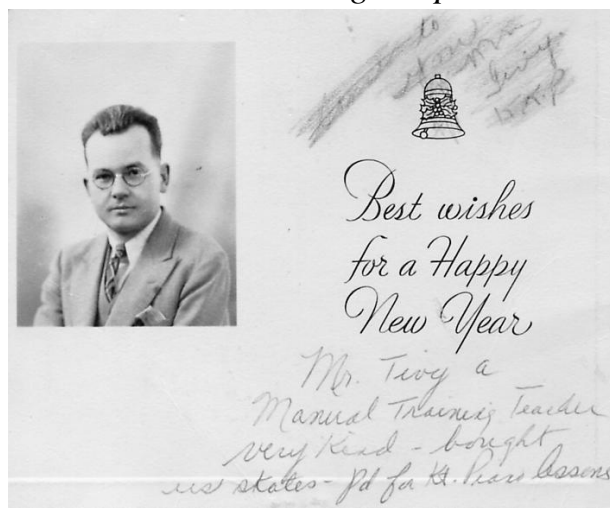
Another of Mr. Tivy's students from the Cochrane Central Public School, Katy Poberezec (Brisson), also remembers Mr. Tivy fondly as she wrote in the following letter:

*"I wish to add the following experiences my family and I remember of Mr. Tivy.*

*Mr. Tivy - how could a person ever forget such a giving person who walked with a limp, I believe that we were in Grade 8 that both boys and girls took manual training. Mr. Tivy, our teacher, taught us how to cut out the wood using a jigsaw. After cutting out the pieces, we assembled them to make a book holder, magazine rack etc... He also taught us how to carve out wood and my assignment was to make a candy dish. I chose to make it in the shape of a leaf. To complete our work, we had to stain and varnish it.*

*He was very kind to my family. I remember there was a bush fire in Fournier Twp. The smoky dark sky could be seen in Cochrane. My mom became alarmed as my dad was at the farm. Mr. Tivy drove my mom, in his small black coupe, to check on how close the fire was to the farm. Both the farm and our small log cabin were spared. It was winter and my sisters and I had no skates. One night a parcel arrived. In each box was a pair of CCM skates. We all were taken by surprise. It was Mr. Tivy's big heart that gave us these skates.*

*At home, we had an organ that you pumped with your feet. Of course, we all tried to play it. To this day I do not know why Mr. Tivy wanted me to take piano lessons, but I did and he paid for them. Later, we did get a piano.*



*I still have this New Year's card that we received from him with his picture on it. I treasure this card.*



*I was away at college when I heard that Mr. Tivy married Verna McGregor, (photo on left) another teacher at our school. Yes, this came as a surprise.*

*Mr. Tivy was a great person who gave to those who were less fortunate. Katy (Poberezec) Brisson"*

Louis Tivy died in January 1972 and his widow Verna wrote a brief account of his life as shown below:

### *LOUIS TIVY*

*Louis was born in 1902 on the farm where his grandparents, David and Anna Leveridge, lived. When he was six years old, his father died following a kick by a horse. His mother was left with three boys and a baby girl, the eldest being only eight years of age.*

*Louis developed polio in childhood. As a result he walked with a limp all his life. I once heard him say that because he walked slower than others, he had time to learn and to be observant.*

*He was educated in the little country school about two and one half miles from his home, walking both ways each day, and I am sure it must have been very difficult in winter. He was able to go to high school for just one year in Bancroft, and the rest of his education he received by studying at night and taking summer courses.*

*He was first a teacher in a country school, within walking distance of his home, for I know he walked home on weekends. He taught at various schools for about seven years, before moving to the northern part of Ontario, where he spent five years in Hearst and ten in Cochrane. While in Cochrane he became interested in manual training, and began to teach it. It was in Cochrane that we met; I was a teacher on the same staff and in many ways he made things easier for me.*



*He left the north in 1945 and began to teach manual training in Leamington District High School. When he started he was the only teacher in the shop department; when he retired, twenty years later, he headed a staff of six.*

*Just before his retirement, he suffered a heart attack. Upon recovery, he turned to writing, and spent many hours doing just that. His articles, dealing with nature or with pioneer days, were published in the Family Herald, and the Leamington Post and News. I have heard him say that he always wanted to write, but after a full day at school was too tired. He loved flowers, trees, and birds, and had a way with all of them. He often visited the grade one classes I taught in the local school, and always came with a treat and a story. Many of the local young people remember Louis's visits.*

*The only dislikes I knew him to have were cats, new clothes, and sauerkraut.  
Verna”*



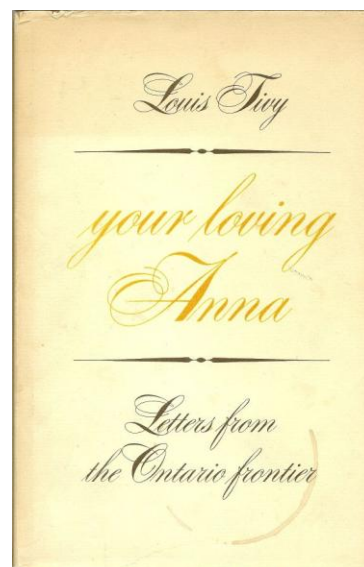
Photo on left of Verna and her sister Marjorie Neal taken in July 2,000.

Just before he died Louis Tivy was editing a book entitled "Your Loving Anna - Letters from the Ontario Frontier." This 120 page book was completed by his widow and published in 1972 by the University of Toronto Press. It is an interesting, first-hand account of pioneering in Ontario. The book was reissued by Kirby Books of Bancroft Ontario and is currently available on line.

The book was based on a series on a series of letters that his Grandmother Anna Leveridge had written to her family back in England between 1883 and 1891. Some of the letters were lost but many were saved and returned to the family in Canada. Anna and her husband David homesteaded in the backwoods of North Hastings County in Ontario, first near Madoc and then in Coe Hill. They left a comfortable life in England to start over in Canada with nothing but a family of seven ranging in age from 1 to 11 years old.



They cleared land for farming, with the father and oldest children earning wages when they could. The letters offer an eye-witness account of this arduous pioneer life. There is little mention of world or Canadian news of the day indicating the isolated life they led. Grandson Louis, who was born on their farm in 1902, linked the letters with a narrative that drew upon his recollections of his grandparents and his own childhood in rural Ontario.



The philosophy that prevails and speaks for their success was that they accepted the temporary privations of their new life, made themselves happy with what they had and looked forward to the future instead of grieving over a way of life that was gone.

#### **References and Acknowledgements:**

Your Loving Anna, by Louis Tivy, University of Toronto Press, 1972

Clayton's Kids, Pioneer Stories of Hearst Public School, 2009

Verna McGregor Tivy, Toronto Ontario, Personal recollections and photos

Ivan Robinson, Victoria B.C. Personal recollections

Katy Poberezec Brisson, Cochrane Ont. Personal recollections and photos.