

Good morning, class! Please stand for the singing of 'God Saved the Queen' and the reciting of the Lord's Prayer.... Thank you, class, you may be seated.

To start today's lessons, I will share the history of this school here in the little village of Napinka. Please pay attention, as there will be a quiz at the end of day.

The first school in the Napinka area was started in 1894, in a farmhouse about one mile east of town where our very first teacher, Miss Ida Crowell, taught her students, as well as farmers, during the winter months.

However, the school that we are in right now was completed in 1901 and is one of the most unique schools in Manitoba! And what makes it unique, you ask?

The stones that went into building this school were hauled between Highway #3 and the United States-Canadian border. In a time before modern tools and tractors, this was a huge undertaking, considering the size of some of the stones in our walls!



Classrooms on the main floor accommodate students in the lower grades while a library and our high school students were situated in the basement. Also, in inclement weather we will use the basement as our gymnasium.

The original two story-field stone building was built without indoor plumbing. As well, we welcomed more students from a little further away and needed more classroom space, and so in the 1950's a new wing was built on the north side of our school, with three new classrooms, indoor toilets, a chemistry lab, staff room and a new library! How exciting for our students!

In 1968, the Manitoba Department of Education established the Unitary System where high schools were consolidated across the province, and with larger farms with smaller families, we had fewer and fewer students. And so, despite our new addition, our high school students will now be sent by bus to Melita, and so our busing of all students has been rescheduled!

So, students, you will be bused to the school here in Napinka half an hour early so your brothers and sisters in high school can catch their bus to Melita to arrive at their school in good time. At the end of day, our school will stay open a half hour longer to wait for the bus travelling from Melita with your older siblings.

We will count the extra half hours in the morning, and in the afternoon as additional recess time. I expect you to use this time to study for upcoming tests, complete your assignment and practice your baseball skills.

Tom-foolery of any kind will not be allowed! I trust you all understand me. Thank you!

The consolidation of schools continued throughout the 1960's. Eventually, the Napinka school was forced to close its doors in 1975 when all students in the area were bused to Melita.

The beautiful 2-story field stone building was designated a heritage site by the municipality of Brenda-Waskada in 1994 and is now used as a seniors' drop-in and community centre.

Napinka School was adapted from a story in *Vantage Points 4*.

Vantage Points Flashbacks were written by David Neufeld with help from Betty Sawatzky. They were originally aired on CJRB Radio out of Boissevain, Manitoba in the early 2020s.