



VACY PUBLIC SCHOOL
CENTENARY

1859-1959

Foreword.

This booklet was written to commemorate the Centenary of the Vacy Public School. It concerns chiefly the Vacy Public School, but in telling the story of the school we must of necessity unfold the history of Vacy, and the history of Vacy is closely associated with the Cory family.

Vacy is situated at the junction of those two delightful streams, The Paterson, and The Allyn, which have their source in the Barrington Tops. The Paterson rises in the springs high up under the s.w. edge of the Barrington Tops, while the Allyn has its origin under the crags of Carey's Peak (5,280 ft.), the highest point in the Barrington.

The township of Vacy nestles on the banks of the Paterson River, while Mt. Johnstone, to the south, Mt. George to the west, and Mt. Breckin, to the north, look down upon it.

H.S. Smith.

Early History.

The land surrounding the pretty township of Paterson (named after Lieutenant-Colonel William Paterson) was, in the days of the convict settlement at Newcastle, known as the "Old Banks".

The convict cedar parties working along the river (then called "The Cedar Arm") had one of their camps at the Paterson, and many a fine log of cedar was rafted down to the lumber yards at Newcastle.

In the early twenties of last century, large grants of land were made by the Government all along the Hunter River Valley. In the Paterson district James B. Webber (Tocal), James Phillips (Bon Vista), William Dun (Duninald), George Lang (Dunmore), Lieutenant Bedwell (Cintra), The Corys (Gostwyck and Cory Vale), J.H. Boughton (Tillimby), and others secured large grants.

The willow trees that so greatly enhance the beauty of the Paterson River are said to have come from a slip cut from a tree near Napoleon's grave at St. Helena, and brought to Paterson by Lieutenant Bedwell, a British Naval Officer, who owned the Cintra estate (on the Paterson River just north of Duninald). This slip which he planted on his estate near the present Gresford Road, flourished and lived to a great age.

The Cory Brothers came from Devonshire, England. Edward Gostwyck Cory was the eldest son of John Cory, and was born in 1797. His middle name was taken from his grandfather, Sir William Gostwyck of Willington, near Bedford. The second son was Captain John Johnston Cory, R.N., who was born in 1800.

It was on 18th Sept., 1823, that Edward G. Cory received a grant of 2,030 acres (Gostwyck) in the Parish of Barford, and on 9th Jan. 1824 John J. Cory, his brother, received a grant of 800 acres in the same Parish (Cory Vale). In the

Middlehope Parish John Cory also held another 400 acres by purchase, dated 17th May, 1825.

Capt. John J. Cory returned to England in 1831, and a power of attorney signed by him on 25th June, 1832, appointed William Danger of "Neotsfeld" to control his land and affairs in N.S.W.

On 26th June, 1839, Capt. John J. Cory died in England, at the age of 39 years, and his estate was inherited by his younger brother, Gilbert (born 1812).

Gilbert Cory came to N.S.W. and lived on that part of the estate named "Neyarra", which is across the river from Cory Vale. (John Cory had lived at Cory Vale).

Edward Gostwyck Cory's estate stretched from the Paterson River in a N.E. direction; almost to the foothills of the Wallarobba Mt. His original grant had increased to almost 5,000 acres at one time. On his estate at "Gostwyck" he built a flour mill, which was the first one in the district to be driven by water power. Here also at "Gostwyck" he commenced the rearing of blood stock. "Camerton", bred at "Gostwyck" was the sire of many prominent race horses in the district in the old days.

The first homestead built by Edward Cory was named "Vineyard Cottage", because of the large area of grape vines he had under cultivation. In later years "Vineyard Cottage", became an inn; one of the first in the district. Here he also kept large flocks of sheep.

In 1836 he built "Gostwyck House". It was a home of some importance, and is still standing to-day, although not entirely as it was when it was first built. It is interesting to read an advertisement concerning "Gostwyck House" published in "The Australian" on 10th August, 1842, which gives a fine description of this homestead.

"To let from 1st July next, all that capital messuage and farm called "Gostwyck", now occupied by William Burnett, and Thomas Hector, together with the government men, water mill, and mill dam, 4,000 acres more or less, 100 acres fenced, two storey home of eight rooms and hall on the ground floor, and three very large rooms over same, dairy, salting and slaughtering house, store rooms, detached kitchen, servants' departments, together with large new barn, imported threshing machine, vineyard, orange and lemon grove of fine quality and full bearing, kitchen garden and fruit trees."

"Gostwyck House" was one of the outstanding homes in the district.

Gilbert Cory's homestead at "Neyarra" has completely disappeared, but beneath a palm tree can still be seen depressions which mark where members of the family, and some of their servants, were buried, but their remains have long since been removed, and interred elsewhere.

In the early days of the 1830's both E.G.Cory, and Gilbert Cory, had assigned servants to help on the estate, not only with the cultivation of crops but also for the protection of the property. During the period 1820-1830 the natives became a problem. There were strong tribes of aborigines in the district, particularly along the river banks, and they caused the early settlers a great deal of trouble. The Corys suffered considerably. Their barns and haystacks were burnt, their sheep attacked, and their workmen speared.

In the "Sydney Gazette" of 24th March, 1827, it states that a large party of aborigines attacked two shepherds of Mr. E.G.Cory, and attempted to drive off a number of sheep. An armed party was needed to disperse the aborigines.

Not only were the aborigines troublesome but the convicts too proved hard to manage. It was in 1833 that Mr. E.G. Cory fell foul of one of his assigned servants -- a man named Coleman -- who attacked him and struck him a terrible blow on the head with a spade. Coleman was subsequently hanged for his murderous attack.

"Gostwyck" continued in the Cory possession until 1873 when Mr. E.G. Cory died at the age of 76. His wife Frances having died in 1870, and there being no children, the estate was sold.

The estate passed to a man named Luke, and later Mr. Theophilus Cooper bought the property. In 1902 the "Gostwyck" estate was subdivided, and Mr. Gerge Priestley bought the homestead block; some twenty years later Mr. Priestley also bought "Tillimby House" an estate on the other side of the river, and thus he secured two very old and historic homes.

"Gostwyck" has now passed to Mr. Edward Priestley, and "Tillimby" has become the property of Mr. Stan Priestley, both sons of Mr. George Priestley.

Originally the "Tillimby" Estate was a grant of 900 acres made to J.H. Boughton. It later passed to Mr. A.A.W. Nivison -- a breeder of fine herford cattle.

It is interesting to note the other estates in the district in the 1820's.

Separating the "Gostwyck" estate from the "Cory Vale" property was an estate now known as "Mowbray", but known then as "The Vineyard". This was a grant of 2080 acres, and was given to Mr. G.J. Frankland. Here the grape vine was cultivated extensively, and large quantities of wine produced. The homestead, built by Mr. G.J. Frankland, was made of locally made bricks, and presented a fine example of the architecture of the day.

At that time the Paterson to Dungog Road crossed the river near the homestead, and the crossing was known as "Vineyard Crossing". It ceased to be used when the bridge was established at Gostwyck.

After Frankland, the estate passed to a Mr. Elliott, who carried out extensive improvements to the estate. At the beginning of the century he installed an irrigation plant. This consisted of a steam engine which pumped water from the river into trenches running between the rows. This experiment was a success for produce from the estate became well-known, and found a ready southern market. Alas the steam engine was too expensive, and this method of irrigation was discontinued.

This estate like all other large estates on the Paterson River was subdivided, and the Ebbeck family secured the homestead block, while the Fraser family purchased another portion of the property.

To the west of Vacy, and adjoining the John Cory grant was an area held by James Adair (Cardoness) which stretched from the Lennoxton Road along the Gresford Road till it joined up with William Bucknell's grant of 2560 acres at "Elmshall", and then extended westward to include land in the Summer Hill area.

The Cardoness homestead built on James Adair's property was modelled on English lines, and contained upwards of 20 rooms. It is still standing and has been completely renovated, and is in good condition. The "Cardoness" estate was later subdivided into several farms. One portion of the estate is the Somerville property "Ferndale", and from the title deeds we see that originally the "Cardoness" estate was a grant to Henry Ferris, although James Adair owned the property in 1828.

Other owners of the "Cardoness" property include Messrs. Craig and W. Tucker. The homestead farm is now owned by R. Fraser, who incidentally

is in possession of the homestead block of Mr. Gilbert Cory - "Neyarra".

"Lennoxton" appears to have been a grant to S. L. Adair (640 acres) while land to the south of the Lennoxton Road was held by Colonel Snodgrass (1015 acres).

"Lennoxton" homestead was destroyed by fire in the early part of this century, but it once stood upon property now owned by Mr. G. Gillespie. Lennoxton of old is remembered for its growing citrus trees and vineyards of issabella grapes which were temptingly close to the roadside.

William Bucknell called his land grant "Elmshall", and on it he built a fine brick homestead of locally made bricks. This property had changed hands many times. Names such as Kettle, Cann, and Puxty are associated with it. Mr. Elhanan Puxty conducted a store there before he moved to "Ferndale". Mr. H.A. Horn is the present owner.

One of the last of the large estates to be subdivided was Mr. Gilbert Cory's Vacy estate. His whole estate of 1200 acres consisted of "Cory-Vale", "Tack-bear" and "Vacy". In 1879 he sold "Cory-Vale" to Mr. John Horn, and it has been in the family ever since. About the same time portion of "Tack-bear" was sold.

The township of Vacy was rather unique. It was practically a private town. Gilbert Cory owned the property, and the buildings, and the residents were his tenants. He died in 1896, and his second wife survived him by 28 years. Then in 1927 the Cory Vacy estate was sold. In all about 50 building blocks (approx. 60'x150') facing the Gresford Road were offered for sale, and found ready buyers at \$10 per block. The hotel and local buildings were sold, and farm lots fronting the Paterson River were disposed of quite briskly. Thus ended the Cory association with Vacy, which lasted over a period of more than 100 years.

Vacy has been referred to as an important little settlement in the early 70's of last century. It was a farming community and its needs were served by --

George Brown	Storekeeper.
John Crotty	Innkeeper.
Thomas Fitzgerald	Teacher, Summer Hill.
William George	Auctioneer, Bird Hill.
Josiah Moreom	Teacher and Postmaster of Vacy.

William Minness	Tinsmith, Cory Vale.
Wormerley Brths.	Bootmakers.

The Grosford Road passed close to the inn and crossed the Paterson River at the ford near the junction with the Allyn River. This ford later gave way to a low level bridge, which served a very useful purpose for many years till, strange as it may seem, it was burnt down. This led to the building of the present high level bridge a little upstream from the old bridge. The new wooden bridge was built in 1898 - high above flood level.

The northern side of the bridge was reinforced with stonework. This was carried out by a German stone mason named Zenisch, who was employed on the property of Mr. John Horn.

On the northern side near the bridge can be seen a cement block, which is all that remains of the old creamery that had been conducted by Mr. Uriah Heep. Cream from this building was taken by dray to Paterson and loaded onto a boat for Bowthorne-Wallalong.

There seems to have been an inn at Vacy from the earliest times. There is reference to it in early communications fixing the position of the original school building. "...The original school site was between the present schoolsite and the Paterson River, on what old maps describe as "The Old Road to Vacy". It was just north of the "Half-Way House Hotel". Evidentially the present hotel known to all as "The Farmers" Hotel was once known as "The Half-Way House".

It is now owned by Mr. J. Murphy, and it has been in the Murphy family since Mr. Peter Murphy took over the business in 1902. Previous hosts at the hotel have been Messrs. Crotty, Blufford, Bernard, Higgins, and Simmons, at the close of last century.

The present Vacy is a self-contained little centre, having a post office, butcher, baker, grocer, hotel, hall, church, and school. In fact, Vacy at one time had its own resident doctor, Dr. Richards, on the Gresford Road, and a surveyor, Mr. F. Tucker.

Mr. Brocker of Gresford used to conduct cattle sales in yards just below the hotel, while Mr. W. D. Keogh was the local blacksmith. Alas that is all passed.

The present local butcher is Mr. W. Brocker. His father took over the butchering business from Mr. W. Sherwood about 1914, and it has remained in the Brocker family since then. Other names associated with the supply of meat in the district in the past have been Brosier of Gresford, and Brocker of Paterson.

The first storekeeper we hear about is Mr. George S. Brown. He became one of the Vacy Public School Board along with Messrs. Gilbert Cory, and G. J. Frankland in 1868. Then there was Mr. George Clarke, and later Miss McCloy. The Cann family owned stores in the district. One shop was at Paterson, another at "Tillimby", and Mr. Fred Cann owned the Vacy store. This store must have been quite a busy spot because at one time there were no less than five people employed there. Mr. D. Shearer was a familiar figure delivering the goods. Later Mr. G. A. Horn took over the business, and a modern shop was built. Succeeding storekeepers have been Messrs. W. Spence, R. Raymond, and the present proprietor is Mrs. B. Smith.

The bakery is conducted by Messrs. J. Murphy and M. McMahon, and they not only supply the needs of the township, but also the surrounding district.

The Post Office

On 1st March, 1960, the Vacy Post Office will achieve the distinction of having reached its Centenary.

The first teacher appointed to the Vacy School also took charge of the office on 1st March, 1860. He was Mr. Charles Chapman. The remuneration was £12 per annum, plus a small commission for the sale of postage stamps.

The next to take over the office was Josiah Morcom (school teacher), as from 15th September, 1862. (Mr. Morcom also held a newspaper agency in Vacy.) When he died his widow became postmistress on 23rd April, 1878.

Money order facilities were extended to the office about 1866.

The postal revenue during the 80's was only a little over £40 per annum, so the office was a losing proposition for the department.

There is a record that a telephone was in use at the office at least as early as 1892, probably for telephoning telegrams between there and the nearest telegraph office.

Mrs. Alice Cox, wife of the school teacher took over the post office when Mrs. Morcom gave it up, as from 19th July, 1892.

In 1904 there was one telephone subscriber, W. Tucker, Cardoness, connected to the Vacy Office, but the entry appears in the Paterson Telephone Directory.

A new teacher Mr. F.C. Willis was appointed to the Vacy Public School, and as from 1st August, 1916, he became Postmaster.

A telephone exchange was opened at Vacy on 4th March, 1915, and by 1916 there were 3 or 4 subscribers.

The postmaster Mr. F.C. Willis resigned on 31st January, 1919, and Mr. A. McInnes was appointed postmaster on 1st February, 1919. He filled the position until the time of his death on 18th August, 1941. The Post Office was removed from the school residence to Mr. McInnes' property opposite.

His widow Mrs. A.E. McInnes was appointed postmistress and remained in charge until 7th May 1943. Her daughter Miss Lily Kathleen McInnes was appointed postmistress from 8th May, 1943. In 1956 she became Mrs. Lowrey, and she is the present postmistress.

Transport

Transport during the latter part of last century was either by bullock waggon, waggonette coach, or horse back.

Waggonettes were a popular means of transport 50 years ago, and many travelled along the Gresford Road. One in particular was Mr. James Chesworth who, each week made a one day journey Newcastle to Gresford to attend the Union sales held there returning next day to the city.

Then came the coaches. They supplied regular services between Paterson, Vacy, and Gresford. Such well known names as Fry and Hancock always will be remembered with coaching days. Evidently keen competition existed between the proprietors of the coaching services.

Hancock's coaches carried this sign:

"Rain, wind, hail or snow,

Hancock's coach is sure to go."

Fry's coach, not to be outdone, had a large red rooster painted on it with the words:

"While I live I'll crow".

These horse-drawn vehicles filled a long-felt want in the community. The drivers were experienced men who had to content with bad roads, and treacherous crossings. One One

occasion a coach drawn by two fine horses plunged into a flooded culvert on the main Gresford Road near the home of Mr. A.C. Somerville. Both horses were drowned but the passengers and drivers escaped injury.

The first blacksmith shop was established in Vacy on land almost opposite to the present bakery. It was conducted by Mr. W. Darcy Keogh, who had done blacksmithing before at a smithy near the Somerville estate with his two brothers. (Mr. A. Malnes also worked at this smithy at a later date.)

The Vacy blacksmith shop was later removed to a position about a quarter of a mile on the Paterson side of the School of Arts. In latter years when there was little call for this type of work the shop closed and has now been demolished, but members of the family are still in the district.

Agriculture

The products of the farms have varied. In early days much wheat was grown, and often had to be taken many miles to be ground. It is on record that wheat grown on the "Tackbear" estate in 1880 was taken to Dungog to be ground.

Large quantities of tobacco were grown at Vacy, and in the Gresford district, and sold on the Australian market. Until recently tobacco presses which had been used in the industry were to be seen in the Gresford district. Wine grapes were grown extensively, and many of the estates had their own cellars. Large flocks of sheep were kept until climatic conditions prevented a continuation of the industry. The timber in the Vacy area has long since been cut down, and now dairying and cattle raising are the two chief industries. In fact, the Paterson-Gresford District is now regarded as one of the most

productive and important areas in the Hunter Valley. A butter factory was established at Gostwyck in the early part of this century. The Raymond Terrace Company operated it. This was sold but in 1926 was repurchased by the Raymond Terrace Company. It is not now used, and the milk from the district goes direct to Hexham.

Here is a side-light on early Vacy - supplied by an ex-pupil of the school and obtained from the library of the Armidale University.

Vacy 1866.

"Vacy is a postal township, situated at the junction of the Allyn and Paterson Rivers in the Parish of Houghton. It has a tobacco factory, and one for arrowroot. It grows tobacco, maize and arrowroot. Wheat is beginning to get the rust. No public conveyance to Paterson. Three times a week a one horse post runs from Gressford to Paterson. There is one hotel - "The Half-Way House". The population is thirty. Vacy is a private township, built on, and belonging to, the estate of Gilbert Gory. It commands the most beautiful scenery on the Paterson River. It has a school which is well attended, and an English Church, both built by the owner for his numerous tenants and their families.

St. John's Church

The original church of England at Vacy was a slab walled shingle roofed building situated in close proximity to the first school building, but on the opposite side of the road. It was built by Mr. Gilbert Cory and is almost certain to have been erected before 1859. This building was used until the new St. John's Church was built in 1887 on land donated by Mr. Gilbert Cory.

The present church, a fine brick building was designed by the Architects, Messrs. W.M. & A.C. Lee, and the building was carried out by Mr. James Richardson, a builder of Maitland.

It is significant to note that the brick used were produced on a property further along the Grosford Road almost opposite Mr. Basil Cardow's property. The years 1886 and 1887 were very wet - heavy rains were experienced in the district, and the builders encountered great difficulties.

The kilns for the firing of the bricks were built by Mr. Pont - father of Messrs. T. & W. Pont of Maitland. It is recorded that in 1887 the district suffered a severe flood, and some 32,000 bricks already for burning were washing away by flood waters.

The contract price for the Church was £650 but with the furniture and fittings the cost was about £800. Many of the seats from the old church were used in the new building.

St. John's Vacy was opened and dedicated on 8th Dec. 1887 by Canon Selwyn. It is recorded that the building was packed to capacity at the dedication ceremony, and the collection at the service amounted to £38.12.10. Later some 120 people attended a supper to mark the occasion. It was not till 17th May, 1903, however, that the Church was consecrated by Bishop Stanton.

St. John's, Vacy, has always been in the

Parish of Paterson, and it is interesting to recall the ministers in charge of the Parish since its inception.

Church of England services were begun in Paterson in 1839, but it was not till 1845 that the present St. Paul's was built, largely through the efforts of the first Incumbent of the Parish.

Incumbents of St. Paul's, Paterson.

1839-46	John Jennings Smith, M.A.
1846-84	F.W. Addams
1860-	H.C. Cloughton
1861-	C. Walsh
1884-85	C.E. Amos
1886-88	W. Swindlehurst
1889-03	Canon Shaw
1903-08	S. Taylor, B.A.
1908-22	A.C. Hirst
1922-24	Canon P.S. Luscombe
1924-30	W.C. Latham
1924-30	H.M.R. Rupp, B.A.
1930-34	B.I. Hobart
1934-45	G.B. Stephenson
1945-49	N.A. Pullin
1949-52	J.R. Kemp
1952.	J.T. Corrigan
1956-57	K. Coaldrake
1958-	W. Brooke

Reading from the Parish notes of Easter 1895 when Rev. John Shaw, B.A., was incumbent :
"With regard to the Sunday School at Vacy, I may mention that it has been re-established, under the ~~Supervision~~ Superintendence of Mr. J. Horn, with a good attendance of scholars and teachers."

The Church Wardens at St. John's Vacy, in the same year, were Messrs. J. Puxty, F. Cann and J. W. Smith. Miss Nellie Smith was the organist.

It is noteworthy that in 1895, Mr. Gilbert Cory of Vacy, Mr. Theophilus Cooper of "Gostwyck" and Mr. George J. Brankland (Snr.) of "Mowbray" were all living, while Mr. A.A. Nivison was the owner of "Tillimby".

The names of early Vacy residents are perpetuated in the Church by gifts made by the families concerned.

The stained glass windows, and altar cross are a memorial to members of the Cory family. The bell tower, and large plate are a memorial to members of the Horn family, while the collection plate in the Church is a gift from the Morcom family in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Morcom.

The present Church Guild is an enthusiastic body of women whose office bearers are :

President : Mrs. P.E. Clements
Secretary : Mrs. H. Foster
Treasurer : Mrs. C. Horn

The organist is Mrs. J.B. Horn, while Mrs. H. Foster is the Superintendent of the Sunday School.

VACY PUBLIC SCHOOL

During the first fifty years of the Colony of New South Wales the education of the settlers' children was provided for by schools conducted under the auspices of the churches and a few private teachers. Although Governor Macquarie had some interest in education, generally speaking there was little support as the young colony grew. A Church and Schools Corporation was set up in 1828 but a growing need was felt for education which was necessarily sponsored by the Churches. In 1848 a Board of Commissioners for National Education was formed to promote the establishment of schools to be conducted according to the principles of Lord Stanley's National System of Education, which had been successfully employed overseas. As well as this organisation, a Board of Denominational Education was set up to administer the many denominational schools already in existence and those newly established. The Government granted a certain sum of money to each of these. In 1848 for instance the Board of National Education was granted £2,000 and the Denominational School Board received £8,450.

It was to the Board of National Education that the Rev. Thomas Stirton, Mrs Gilbert Cory and one other gentlemen of the district applied in January 1857 for a National School to be established at Vacy. In their application these men, who formed a committee of local patrons of education, stated that there were 35 boys and 36 girls of school age in the district. They proposed that a slab building 28ft. by 18ft. with an attached two room residence for the master should be built as a school house. The proposed cost was £200 and the local patrons guaranteed that £65 could be raised by the residents of the village. (One of the terms of the establishment of a National School in any district was that the Board supplied two-thirds of the cost of the school buildings and repairs while the remainder was contributed locally.)

The proposed site was an acre of land bounded on the east by the road from Paterson to Gresford and on the west by the property of Mr. Cory, who would donate the land. The matter seems to have fallen into abeyance for some time as it was not until August 1858 that Mr. Cory wrote to the District Inspector, Mr. McIntyre, requesting the use of 405 slabs which had been provided about five years previously for a school at the Brecon. Reporting on the matter, Mr. McIntyre said the slabs, which were valued at £16 were "lying at the Brecon", two miles from Vasy, near Campsie, on the property known as Bucknell's Estate. It is not clear from the records whether this material was used but in May 1859 Stephen Stanbridge wrote to the Secretary of the Board requesting that a copy of the rules and regulations of the National System for non-vested schools (i.e. schools housed in buildings not vested by the Board). Mr. Lee, the teacher at Campsie, wrote to the Board in June requesting appointment to Vasy as he had heard that the school there had been completed. Mr. Lee's application was unsuccessful. The school at Campsie was closed soon after and Mr. Stirton asked if the furniture there could be used for the Vasy School, which was soon to be opened.

According to the Report of the Board of National Education for 1859 the school opened on 1st Sept., the teacher being Mr. C. Chapman.

As well as being in charge of the school, Mr. Chapman held the position of postmaster at Vasy. In May 1860 Mr. Cory assured Mr. Wills in a letter that Mr. Chapman's position as postmaster did not interfere with his duties as teacher. He wrote, "Mrs. Chapman attends to the post office, which is kept in their private residence, and the mail arrives at 11 a.m. and between 1 and 2 p.m. - out of school hours."

In his report for the year, Mr. McIntyre made the following comments about the school:

- a) It is a very good building, but the ground is not fully enclosed. The furniture is temporary and very rude. The apparatus is incomplete. The material condition is unsatisfactory.
- b) The subject taught agrees with the table of Minimum Instruction. The instruction is mechanical and to a certain extent superficial.

Although 67 pupils were on the roll at the end of first year, the average attendance was only 37; in 1860 the enrolment dropped to 52 and the average attendance was only 29. The attendance was further reduced in the following year owing to floods. On one day at least, 29th July, there was no attendance at all.

The year 1862 was not a successful one for the school. Mr. Stirton resigned as a member of the School Committee (he was also local patron of the National Schools at Tillimby, and Bendelba) as his time was fully taken up with his parish duties. As at the end of July Mr. Chapman discontinued teaching at the school, saying he wished to be removed. The local patrons appointed Mr. Josiah Morcom, who had for the past 14 years been teaching at the Church of England Denominational School at Belwarra. Mr. Morcom began his duties at Vacy in September, and at the beginning of October Mr. Cory wrote to say that the patrons were very pleased with his work. "I am happy to say the school is progressing favourably. We mustered 37 children last week and 39 this, and I have no doubt the number will increase. Mr. Cory again wrote in February, 1863, to say the school was much improved but the local patrons were concerned that Mr. Morcom was being paid only £5 per month. In the same letter he remarked that the school was still about £60 in his debt, as he had provided a considerable amount of money for the building.

The records contain little information for the next few years. The enrolment remained between 35 and 40 and the average attendance between 25 and 30. In 1866 the two Boards of Education were disbanded and the Council of Education was set up under the terms of the Public Schools Act. The Denominational Schools still received assistance from the ~~the~~ Government provided they were certified by the Council. National Schools became known as Public Schools, and Local Public School Boards replaced the Committees of local patrons. In 1868 the Vacy Public School Board consisted of Messrs. Gilbert Coxy, G.J. Frankland, and G.S. Brown.

Mr. Morcom applied for a move in 1870 but a suitable school was not available at the time. He was generally popular in Vacy, and a petition was sent to the Council of Education in 1870 asking that he be not removed. On 27th April 1878 Mr. Morcom died and was buried at St. Paul's Churchyard, Paterson. He had been a teacher for 34 years.

Miss Edith Morcom, his daughter, was appointed the next teacher at Vacy. (She had a private school at Mr. Laurie's on the Upper Allyn River for two years). Mr. Inspector Bradley reported on Miss E. Morcom: "She is a young lady of very fair intelligence and information; and of active industrious habits and her aptitude for teaching is quite ~~very~~ equal to the average shown by applicants for employment."

At this time the enrolment at the school was 45 with an average attendance of 33. In 1883 Miss Edith Morcom resigned and was succeeded by her sister, Miss Margaret Morcom, who had been teaching at Campsie.

Evidently the original school was inadequate because on 4th March, 1882, Mr. Inspector McIntyre recommended the acquisition of the present site of two acres.

The site of the original school was stated to be between the present school site and the Paterson River, "on the Old Road to Vacy". It was just north of the "Half-Way House Hotel".

The new school, with its residence combined, (as was the rule), was constructed of brick and was erected in 1882. However, it was not till September 1886 that the formalities with Mr. Cory over the resumption of his property were completed and compensation paid, which amounted to £73.

In July 1890 the Inspector reported that the school site was badly drained, and water was lying underneath the building. A tender for £8.6.6. from Mr. J. Oldfield was accepted and the work was put in hand.

During 1892 Miss Morcom was appointed to the Infants' Department at Blackfriars Public School, Sydney, and in the same year 13 residents petitioned the Department to appoint Mr. Benjamin Cox in her place. Mr. Cox was the teacher at Allynbrook, or as it was then known - "Caergwrle", and he was evidently well-known in Vacy. Mr. Cox was appointed soon afterwards.

In 1893 a number of repairs were carried out at a cost of £90, including the painting, inside and out, of the school and residence, and the construction of a room 14'x10' on the back of the school residence. One Inspector reporting on the matter stated: "Mr. Cox is an earnest, and painstaking teacher, who takes good care of the property of the Department, and he deserves to be made comfortable." Mr. J. Oldfield carried out both the painting and building projects.

A sidelight on the cost of transport in 1894 is contained in a letter written by Mr. Cox to the Department for equipment to be sent from Sydney - "Should the above be forwarded from Sydney the most economical route would be by steamer to Paterson, from which place it can be sent by coach - fare about 9d. or 1/-." Rates have certainly changed.

On 23rd July, 1894, the Inspector reported : " Vacy is a 2nd class school. Last quarter the enrolment was 58, and the average attendance 44. When there is anything like a full attendance the pupils are very crowded."

Great difficulty was experienced in keeping dampness out of the brickwork at the school, and residence. Drains had to be dug, and the brick work painted quite frequently. One contractor, Mr. William Heald carried out a painting contract for £8.5.0. in November 1895, and in December of the same year Mr. F. Connors installed an additional 600 gl. tank at the residence for £6.10.0.

In November 1895 Mr. Cox asked permission to begin school at 9 a.m. and finish at 3 p.m. He pointed out that Vacy was a dairying district, and that the parents needed their children to come home early to help on the farm. Many of the children rode to school in creamery carts and were in the playground before 8 a.m., and then wished to be allowed to go early in the afternoon. Permission was granted for the variation in school hours.

The years 1894, 1895 and 1896 were difficult ones, for the summers were very hot and dry, and the school residence was often without water; there being only three tanks holding 1400 gls. 1896 was particularly dry and the cost of carting water to the residence that summer amounted to £1.8.0. A new tank was supplied by the Department and installed by Mr. Patrick Kealy for £6.0.0.

A sidelight on Departmental policy can be gained from the following incident.

A Referendum to decide the issue of Federation was held in 1898, and on 25th May of that year. Mr. Cox asked permission to assist the returning officer. The School was being used as a polling place. The Department replied that it was not considered desirable for him to act in such a capacity.

In 1898 Mr. Cox, at his own expense, built a laundry and bathroom at the school residence.

The enrolment at the school was then 57 with every prospect of an increase.

During the next few years Mr. Cox had considerable family worries; two of his children had scarlet fever, and the school was closed from 6th March until 28th April, 1899.

Earlier in the year Mr. Cox had applied for two months sick leave. Chief Inspector Bridges noted that Mr. Cox's services were considered to have been meritorious and leave was granted on full pay, which was unusual for such a long period.

In July 1908, Messrs. J. Woodhouse, L. Woodhouse, J. Watson, J. Presland and A. J. Edwards, residents of Lennoxton and Creebank, said they were willing "to provide two suitable logs, place them in position across the Paterson River, adze the top surface, and carry out any work necessary to make a safe and convenient means to enable our children to attend the Vacy Public School." They asked the Department to pay 25/- to cover the cost of hauling the logs to the river, and providing bolts and chains with which to secure them in position. The teacher supported the application. He said that the seven children involved could not attend any other school, and added "It is unnecessary for me to point out the dangers to wade through water and often in a very heated condition." The logs were installed, but in time the floods washed them away.

Mr. Cox was nominated in January 1911 for appointment as a Justice of the Peace. Teachers were not allowed to take offices of that kind, and Chief Inspector Dawson recommended that "The Chief Secretary's Department be informed, as in other similar applications, that it is not desirable to concur in the nomination."

In March 1911 a manual training room measuring 12'6"x9' was erected. The work appears to have been done by the teacher himself, who was something of a carpenter.

From 1909 to 1911 there was much trouble in the teacher's family owing to diphtheria - Dr. Perkins, the Government Health Officer at Morpeth, and Dr. Dick, the Medical Health Officer at Newcastle inspected the premises and recommended thorough renovations. These were carried out in 1912 at a cost of £222.10.0.

Mr. Cox specialised in manual training. For a number of years he sent specimens of the Children's work to the Dungog District School Exhibition. These included penmanship, printing, painting, rope work, woodwork, plain needlework, and fancy work of various kinds.

The 18th March 1914 must have been a memorable occasion. The children were taken to Newcastle for the day instead of being given the usual school picnic. They travelled to Paterson by waggonette, and thence by train. Several parents accompanied the party.

After spending 24 years in Vacy Mr. Cox was transferred in June 1916.

The next teacher was Mr. Frederick Willis. He was appointed post-master too, on condition that the work was done by his wife and daughter. During 1917 the attendance dropped to 26, and the following year Mr. Willis was transferred.

In 1919 Mr. Percy Edwards was appointed teacher. He died suddenly while quite a young man, after being in charge for only 4 years.

He was succeeded by Mr. William Helm in 1922, who was the teacher for the next 8 years.

Increased enrolment meant extra seating accommodation, and this was provided in 1928 for the 53 pupils attending the school.

It was during Mr. Helm's time that the old gallery was removed from the school, and the floor levelled, and the desks turned across the room. This work was carried out by contract by a Mr. A. Presland for the sum of £10,500.

Mr. Thomas Scott was appointed to the school in April 1931 and within a few years extensive repair work was carried out. A sum of £225 was spent on work which included overhauling the drainage and repairing the fences.

No repair work was done to the school however as it was stated that a new schoolroom was being planned.

In July 1938 electricity was connected to the residences.

Mr. Scott was a very popular teacher and he interested himself in the welfare of the district. It was mainly due to his efforts that a new low-level bridge was constructed at Horn's Crossing. Very gay with bunting the day Mr. Spocner came to open that bridge.

Mr. John Glock took up duties in January, 1940, as the teacher, and he remained until 1949. It was during his term as teacher that a new classroom was completed in August 1945. The contractor was Mr. J. C. Pickles, and the cost £757.

Mr. Ashley O'Toole succeeded Mr. Glock in 1950. It was during his term as headmaster that a new classroom was erected in September 1956. Developments in school architecture as well as a rise in building costs may be gathered by comparing the price of the building erected in 1945 with that of the one in 1956. The latter cost £3,368.

It was during Mr. O'Toole's term that a mouth-organ and accordian band was established, and many fine trophies were also won at the Gresford District P.S.A. Association.

Miss Morton was the assistant teacher and she was later succeeded by Miss Bordiss in 1956.

Mr. Harold Smith was appointed to Vacy in January, 1958, and is the present Headmaster. The assistant teacher is Mrs. C. Horn, who was Miss Bordiss.

List of Teachers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Appointed</u>
Charles Chapman	August, 1859.
Josiah Morcom	September 1862
Edith Morcom	May 1878
Margaret Morcom	December 1883
Benjamin Cox	June 1892
Frederick Willis	June 1916
Percy Edwards	December 1918
William Helm	August 1922
Thomas Scott	April 1931
John Glock	December 1939
Ashley O'Toole	January 1950
Harold Smith	January 1958

The School of Arts was erected in 1901. The trustees being Messrs. G.A.Horn, C.Somerville and W.J.Fairhall.

The present Officers are Mr.W. Brooker, President; Mr. A. Bowd, Secretary; Mr. D. Carow, Treasurer.

The C.W.A.

For many years there has been a branch of the C.W.A. in Vacy. It is composed of a band of energetic workers under the leadership of :

Mrs. D. Gillespie - President
Mrs. A. Merchant - Secretary
Mrs. J.B. Horn - Treasurer

The Red Cross

This organisation has been very active during the years, and it is well supported by the District residents.

The President is Mrs. H. Wilson, with Mrs. A. Merchant Secretary and Mrs. C. Stout Treasurer.

A Junior Branch is established at the school, and the children are eager workers and raise creditable amounts for Headquarters.

The P.&C. Association

The P. & C. Association is doing a fine job in providing much valuable equipment for the school.

The Officers are :

Mr. A. Bowd - President
Mr. H.C. Lawrence - Secretary
Mrs. K. Lowrey - Treasurer

DID YOU KNOW? (A few questions about Vacy)

That native bears were plentiful in the trees in and around the school in 1900?

That the soil in front of the old brick school was brought up from the river bank?

That somebody upset a very select dance in the original building by putting a grayhound dog in through the window?

That a dancing school was held in the original school building? Mr. Vines Keogh was the violinist and Mr. Bill Keogh was the pianist and instructor.

That members of the Morton family who settled in Western Australia named their houses "Torryburn" and "Trevallyn", as a reminder of their early life spent in this district?

That water was often drawn from the river in a cask mounted on a slide, for household purposes?

That the original owners of "Gostwyck" and "Tillimby" died without leaving children.

That in 1858 a family of three, Mrs. James Griffith, his wife Sarah Griffith, both aged 40, and their infant aged 2 years, were drowned in the Paterson River near Gostwyck on Christmas Day?

That the first recorded burials in the St. Paul's cemetery, Paterson, were in 1839: James Morland (29) and John Chambers (26)?

That Mr. B. Cox at the Vacy School was a skilled carpenter? It is said that he made his own sulky while living here.

That Mr. H.H. Brown, member for this district, lived at Coulston near Cresford?

That the Governors (bushrangers) - as young lads were familiar figures on the Coulston Estate.

That Rev. John Smith the first incumbent at Paterson was born in England in 1784 - before the first settlement in Australia.

That at 2 a.m. on 14th November 1896 the Farmers' Hotel and butcher's shop were burnt down?

That the first Vacy bridge built in 1857 was burnt down on 19th December, 1896, at 2 a.m.

Acknowledgements

Dangar's Index and Directory.
The Lands Department - maps of the County
of Durham.
Letter Book, Board of National Education.
Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative
Assembly.
Report of the Board of National Education.
The Maitland Mercury.
The Sydney Morning Herald.
Publications of the Newcastle Historical
Society.
Writings by Professor Elkin, and Rev. H.
Rupp.
Department of Education, Research and
Planning.

I offer my grateful thanks to the following
for their assistance and help in preparing
this booklet, and in loaning photographs.

Mrs. M. Hancock, and staff, of the Mitchell
Library.

Mr. F.C. Barnes, Public Relations Officer
of the Post Master General.

The staff of the Maitland Library.

Miss Cann, Mr. T. McInnes, Rev. Brooks,
Mr. J.B. Horn, Mr. D. Horn, Miss M. Horn,
Mr. H.H. Crouch, Mr. & Mrs. P. Clements,
Mrs. Lowrey, Mr. & Mrs. W. Brooker, Mrs.
Brooker, Mrs. J. Murphy, Mr. J. Cardow,
The Gillespie Family, Mr. R. Worthington,
Mr. J. Somerville, Mr. & Mrs. W. Minness,
Mrs. C. Stout, Mrs. C. Horn.

To all other kind folk who helped me I offer
my thanks.

I trust that you will find the reading en-
joyable and that it will bring back
pleasant memories.

H.S. Smith,
August, 1959.