

Laura Harriet Reid

By Susan Parker

A graduate during Pictou Academy's centennial year, Laura Reid forged an educational career that took her around the province. Her passion for art, music, and teaching inspired people throughout her community.

Born in April 1897 to John David Patterson Reid and Clara Fullerton, Laura Harriet Reid was a successful student, educator, and artist from Pictou. Her maternal grandfather, David Fullerton, was the son of Fergus and Mary Fullerton, who moved from Scotland to Lyons Brook around 1818. Laura's father was a clerk in Pictou, the son of Orkney Islands' immigrants Archibald Reid and Mary Downie, who settled in the Merigomish area.

Laura attended East End School in Pictou, followed by Pictou Academy. She ranked top of her class all four years, including her final year when she won the prestigious gold medal. Her graduating year also marked the 100th anniversary of Pictou Academy in 1916. The silver medal went to Myrtle V. Grant, marking the first time two female students from the town of Pictou won the honours.

After graduation, Laura taught in Chance Harbour for two years before attending the Nova Scotia Normal College in Truro. She then taught in the Annapolis Valley before returning to Pictou to teach at the East End School, later becoming its principal. Besides teaching, Laura enjoyed singing in the First Church Choir, along with her mother, and was an active member of Canadian Girls in Training, a program similar to Girl Guides ran through the church.

In December 1926, she married John S. Cameron of Chance Harbour. Cameron's family were long-time residents of the area, with his great-grandfather originally immigrating around 1808 from Scotland. His grandfather, John Cameron, was a shipbuilder, while his father Daniel operated a farm and was a councillor for the region in the 1910s.

Laura and her husband moved to Boston in 1826 and resided in Massachusetts for seventeen years. They eventually returned to Chance Harbour to operate the Cameron farm. Laura joined the local church as an organist and conducted a boys choir. Alongside music, Laura enjoyed painting. She taught painting classes at her home in Chance Harbour, where her students became known as the "Kitchen Painters." In the summertime, the local community hall hosted an art show that filled the walls with work from Laura and her students.

In the last few years of her life, Laura resided at Edward Mortimer Place. Her former students visited her often, showing their appreciation towards an inspiring teacher and one of Pictou Academy's top graduates.



Photo of Laura Reid from 1916