

PUBLIC SCHOOL S.S.#1.:: Douglas School.

N.E.pt. of the south pt. of lot #2 on the east side of Concession Rd. built 1909.

On the 17th. day of Sept. 1907 , the executors of the estate of Alice Douglas sold to The Board of Public Trustees of the Village of Fort Erie, the above tract of land for the site of a new four room school. Total cost of the property was fourteen hundred and sixty dollars, or four hundred dollars an acre.

Construction of a four room brick school was begun in 1909, and the total cost was to be \$ 11.000. The architect was C.M. Borter of Niagara Falls, and the contractor was Edgar Burger the son of George Burger the builder of the old school on John St. Mr. A.T. Elliott, town druggist was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the time these plans went into effect.

The school boasted real slate blackboards in it's classrooms, however it still lacked indoor plumbing. The blackboards were bought in Slatting Penn. and were a great improvement over the painted boards used in the past. The brick in these original four rooms was brought over from Buffalo, and all the material for the school was drawn up Bertie hill by horse and wagon. The laborers received \$ 2.50 for a ten hour day.

The hill in front of the school was covered with thorn bushes, and a narrow path led from the road below to the school. It was not until 1927 that a man by the name of Smith, living at the corner of Princes and Archange was commissioned to do the landscaping. After that it was the duty of the janitor not only to look after the school building, but also to take care of the grounds.

Mr. Dodds was the first principal of the school, with Miss Mc. Kealey as assistant and Miss Daverne as the other teacher. The School Board members at the time were Rev. A.C. Mackintosh :Secretary William Dougall: C.P. Maybee: A.T. Elliott: and A.N.Smith. Anna Harris was the Janitor followed by Lucy Harris, William Sheppard and in 1916 Thomas H. Dougherty.

In 1922 the school board approached the town council with a written request for \$ 40.000 to build an addition to the school.They met with a great deal of opposition. Many said that if an addition was made it would be without their consent. Instead, the council was in favour of a new four room school at the foot of Henrietta and Kincardin (Centrs Ave.)

Controversy over the addition to the Public School continued for the better part of a year. With the building of Wintemute School in 1918 the old Amigari School closed it's doors, and room had to be found for a number of it's pupils at the Fort Erie Public School.

Sufficient room however was not available, and it was found necessary to aquire an overflow school to accomodate them. In Dec. of 1918 the trustees of the Free Methodist Church on Bertie St. sold their building to the Fort Erie School Board for \$800.00. It was used as a school for three years, but did not put an end to the overcrowding. Again in 1922 the School Board was faced with the same problem of finding additional room.

Accomodation was urgently needed and by Sept. 1st, if they were to get the government grant. By June the School Board decided to build the much needed addition; if the town would pass a bylaw for the necessary funds. In Aug. the decision to go ahead was left to the rate payers, and the bylaw was passed by a majority of 41 votes. It allowed the board to proceed with preparing the detailed plans and specifications for the proposed six room addition to the back.

On Sept. 7th. 1923 the Fort Erie Public School reopened with eight of the ten rooms then in use. The cost of the addition was \$43,000. or \$7,165 per class room. At this time the school was renamed Douglas School, in honor of Dr. William Douglas a member of the family who sold the original land to the board.

When we speak of the old Phipps St. School we remember Rose Seaton, with Douglas it was the principal Roy Sexsmith. He returned to Fort Erie after the first world war, with his bride, emmediately joining the staff of the Fort Erie Public School. For sometime afterwards he taught classes in his army uniform, and ruled his pupils with much discipline.