

SCHOOLS IN THE FORT ERIE DISTRICT:::

In the early 1800's school was attended at the "Old Fort" by the children of military personnel, and in the late 1830's a small number of pupils attended private classes in Bertie Hall the old Forsyth home at the foot of Phipps St.

The first public school in the village of Waterloo(Fort Erie) stood by the ferry landing, near the foot of Bertie St. It was also the site of the General Store of Alexander Douglas. Records are still available listing the pupils that attended there.

In April of 1848 a new frame school was built on the s.w. cr. of Waterloo and Forsyth st., consisting of one room. It was known as Bertie S.S.#1. In June of 1862 a disastrous fire swept through the village, down Queen St. along the Niagara River rd. and up Forsyth. The school was destroyed by fire, and a plot of land on the north side of John St. just up from Waterloo was purchased for a new school.

In 1863 work began on the John St. School, a one room brick building with a large basement that could be used for overflow classes and a play area. It was affectionately called the "Alley School" by the villagers. In the early 1900's before the building of Douglas, a frame addition was added to the west side of the existing building, to help handle the ever increasing number of pupils. When the old schoolhouse was made into an apartment building, a sign marked Bertie S.S.# 1 was found bearing the date 1855, and no doubt had come from the Forsyth schoolhouse.

In 1852 the 1st. Garrison Rd.#4 was built on the north side of the street opposite Buffalo Rd. It was of log construction. In 1879 the building was sold and a stone school was built on the same side of the road, just to the east.

In 1876 the school at Victoria operated from the Warden building on Courtwright St. Later that year land was purchased on the Forsyth farm the north side of Phipps St., and a frame schoolhouse was built. In 1891 construction began on a large two story four room brick school which later took the name of the road in front: Phipps St. This building had an addition of two rooms 1908: and later 2 to west, 2 to east. 1927 four rooms were added to the front making a total of fourteen rooms.

In 1877 a one room frame schoolhouse was built on the north side of Gilmore Rd., just up from the cr. of Dunlop St. It was known as the Amigari School, and was run by the Phipps St. school section.

In 1909 when the Alley School could no longer take care of the children in the village of Fort Erie, it was decided to build a larger school on the hill, a tract of land owned by John Douglas. Edgar Burger was the contractor for the original four room building. An addition of six rooms was added to the back in 1922 and by the fall of 1923 eight of the ten rooms were in operation.

In 1917 Wintemute School was built on the south east sr. of Central Ave. and Wintemute St. Built to alleviate the crowding at Phipps St. it opened in 1918. The upper floor was used to house the Continuation classes that moved to this location from Phipps St.

During the 1920's both the Crown Theatre on Dufferin St. and the old Methodist Church on Bertie were used for extension schools.

In 1928 at a cost of \$176,000. the Fort Erie High School was built on the open land on the south side of Wintemute St.

Mather School was built in 1928 along with the help of Alonzo Mather who donated the land on King St., just south of the Garrison Rd.

In 1945 a committee from St. Michael's Church purchased the land on the east side of Central Ave., and along with it the large building known as Winston Hall. For a number of years classes were held in this hall, and the school was called Our Lady of Victory Jr. Elementary. On April 1st, 1955 a serious fire destroyed the greater part of this building. In 1953 St. Philomena a four room school was built-Crecent Park.

In 1955 Torrence St. School, consisting of eight rooms was built on the old Sherk farm, the north side of upper Bertie St. It opened Jan. 3rd, 1956, and was later renamed Gen. Vanier.

In 1956 sod laying ceremonies took place for the new Lady of Victory Jr. School. Cost of the ten room building was \$140,000. In 1959 three rooms were added to the Jr. School.

In 1964 ground was broken for the Lady of Victory Sr. Elementary School, consisting of six classrooms, an administration room and a gymnasium.

An extensive building program got underway at Fort Erie High in 1964, and the completed buildings went under the new name of Bertie District High School.

In 1965 Fort Erie Sr. Elementary School opened on the site of the former Wintemute School which had been demolished to make way for the new building.

In 1968 both the Sr. and Jr. Catholic Schools were considerably enlarged. St. Philomena's enlarged to seven classrooms, gym, lunchroom and administration offices.

In 1969 the Catholic School Board of Fort Erie came under the newly formed group called "The Welland County School Board".

On June 30, 1978 Bowen Rd. School was officially closed.

C.R. Louis Mc. Dermott
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