

THE BELL HAVE TOLLED!

Many will remember the passing of the one room schoolhouse. Due to the lack of enrolment and the high costs of repairs, the large two story brick buildings that followed them must also be phased out. This month we have seen the demolition of Mather School on King St. In 1984 when the pupils and teachers of Rose Seaton move into their new building, the wrecking crews will begin again and all that will remain will be land for a playground. This too, is the last year for Douglas School, and although nothing has been decided about the building the pupils will move to Gen. Vanier and Sr. Elementary. In honor of the occasion, both schools will be holding an open house on Sund. June 10th. from 2- 4. They are looking forward to the return of many former teachers and pupils for this event.

Fort Erie's education system began at the "Old Fort" where children of military personnel were taught. The first teacher was John Garner followed by Joseph Richard Palmer. In the mid 1830's a small number of students attended private classes at Bertie Hall at the foot of Phipps St.

The first public school in the village of Waterloo(Fort Erie) stood by the ferry landing at the foot of Bertie St. The teacher was David Lamont and the inspector Rev. John Anderson. Records from 1844 still exist today listing the pupils that attended there. By 1848 it was necessary to build again, and a one room frame schoolhouse was erected on the south west corner of Waterloo and Forsyth streets. It was known as Bertie S.S.#1 and continued to operate till Sept. 1863 when the building was destroyed by fire.

Construction began immediately on a new one room brick school that was built on the north side of John St. It had a large basement for overflow classes. It was known by the villagers as "The Alley School"

In the early 1900's before the building of Douglas School, a frame addition was added to the west side of the existing building. This however did not provide sufficient room for the ever increasing number of pupils; and plans were made to erect a new school on the hill, which we know to-day as Douglas School.

The following article will provide a concise history of both Douglas and Rose Seaton. Later this month in the local library there will be a more complete historical display of all the schools in the Greater Fort Erie area, both pictural and related items of learning such as desks, slates books etc. It is hoped that the school children will find time to see this exhibit before the closing of the school year.