

EARLY SCHOOLS

Although the earliest documented school in the present day Niagara Falls was Simcoe Street School, located in the Village of Clifton, it was actually the successor to two older schools. The first of these two schools was located on Ferry Road (present day Clifton Hill), and the second was on First Concession Road (present day Victoria Avenue).

Ferry Road Schoolhouse (c. 1835-1853)

This schoolhouse was a roughcast building which was built prior to 1835. It was originally located on the south side of Ferry Hill, on what is now the location of the Park Motor Hotel. It was 30 feet x 20 feet, and had benches arranged along the walls which served as desks for the students. When Samuel Zimmerman purchased the land around 1850, he had the schoolhouse moved across the street. This area became School Section (S.S.) Number Seven, when school sections were established in 1846. This building remained in use as a school until 1853.

Old Bender School (1854-1857)

In 1853, the Village of Elgin, which had grown around the Canadian bridgehead of the Lower Suspension Bridge, was incorporated. In 1854, the people of Elgin built a new school in the Bender Woods on First Concession Road (Victoria Avenue). It was a stone structure which was used as the area school until 1857. The building was later used as a residence, and was eventually purchased by the International Camp Meeting Association for their Wesley Park Project of 1885.

Falls View School (1910-1981)

Around 1853, S. S. Number Seven, Stamford, was divided into the northern part, the Villages of Elgin and Clifton; and the southern part, Falls View. At the same time as the Old Bender School was built, Falls View School was also opened to serve the needs of the elementary students in Falls View. This school was a small one-room stone building which was situated on an acre of land on Buchanan Avenue, south of Murray Hill. The school remained in use until 1910, when a new four-room brick schoolhouse, also called Falls View School, was built on Dunn Street.

Four classrooms were added to the Falls View School in the 1920's, and the school was the first elementary school to build a swimming pool and gymnasium. Additional property was acquired to construct rooms for art, home economics and industrial arts, and dressing rooms for the pool. By 1940, six more classrooms were added to the structure. The school was closed in 1981, as a result of declining enrolment. The building was renovated, and in 1987, it was opened as Cavendish Manor Retirement Home.

Simcoe Street School (1857-present)

In 1856, Clifton and Elgin amalgamated to form the Town of Clifton, and a decision was made to build a new school. On January 24, 1857, the first meeting of the Clifton School Board was held. The board purchased an acre of property on Simcoe Street from Hermanus Crysler in July, 1857. The building was completed in November, and on November 17, Charles F. Secord, principal of the Bender Street School, led his students to the new school and classes commenced the same day. The new Simcoe Street School was a spacious 2 room red-brick building, with

living quarters for the teacher located on the second floor. In early schools, many teachers were responsible for doing all of the maintenance work, teaching all grades, and leading Bible study on Saturdays, and were therefore obliged to live at the schoolhouse.

Simcoe Street School required 2 room additions in 1874, 1886, 1889, 1895 and 1902, resulting in a total of 12 rooms. In 1889, a kindergarten program was introduced but had to be discontinued due to a lack of space in 1901; it was not revived until 1945. Also, Simcoe Street School became the first area school to install gas heating in 1902, at a cost of \$25. The school celebrated its centenary in 1957. In early November, 1969, construction began on a new school to replace the old building, which was closed in June, 1970 and demolished in October of the same year. Students began classes at the new school in September, 1970, although the school did not celebrate its official opening until March 4, 1971.

Drummondville School (c. 1795-1877); Lundy's Lane School (1915-1970); S.S. Number 6

There were a number of school buildings which preceded the Lundy's Lane School. The earliest of these schools was the Drummondville School, a small one room log house which was built around 1795 on the east side of the Drummond Hill Presbyterian Church. This schoolhouse was replaced with a small stone building sometime in the 1820's, and was located to the west of the church. When school sections were formed in 1846, this area became S.S. Number Six, Stamford, and the school is often referred to by this name. A new roughcast schoolhouse was built in 1851. As the number of students attending the school increased, however, Drummondville School became very overcrowded. To temporarily relieve the problem, Barker Street School was built in 1877, and the Drummondville School was closed.

The Drummondville schoolhouse was sold to Warren Spence, who moved it to Barker Street in 1877 and opened Spence's Carriage Works. It was leased by a number of people after Spence's death, and was finally purchased by the Parish of Our Lady of Peace at Falls View, who renovated it and renamed it Mariann Hall. It was used as a separate school for a number of years and was demolished in July, 1968.

When Niagara Falls became a City in 1904, classes for elementary students living in the Lundy's Lane-Drummond Hill area were conducted in Niagara Falls South High School (Stamford Collegiate). By 1913, the students had filled three classrooms and could no longer be accommodated in the High School, and so, a decision was made to build a new elementary school. The new school, a six-room structure, was completed in January, 1915 and named Lundy's Lane School. In 1921, an additional two classrooms were added. The school experienced a continuous increase in attendance until 1945, when an enrolment of 400 students necessitated the addition of basement classrooms. In 1953, the school introduced a half-day kindergarten program, further increasing the enrollment. That year, the School Board established Senior Schools, and the crowded conditions at Lundy's Lane School were alleviated. The school was closed in June, 1970, and damaged by a fire on February 21, 1972. It was torn down in 1973. A McDonald's Restaurant is now located on the former site of Lundy's Lane School.

Barker Street School (1877-1969)

Built in 1877, Barker Street School was a four room red-brick building. It required an addition of two rooms in 1912, and in 1914 the school was thoroughly renovated and four rooms, and modern facilities were added. Barker Street School was demolished in August of 1969, and replaced with Battlefield School in 1971.

Kitchener Street School (1909-1975)

"Centre School," as Kitchener Street School was first called, opened in 1909 with 105

students. It began as a four room schoolhouse, but soon required a four room addition, which was built in 1915. In 1917, the school formed what is believed to be the first Home and School Association in the area. In 1917-1918, overcrowded conditions forced the school to cut primary classes to half-days, until another four-room addition was built in 1920. In 1941, Kitchener Street School became the Industrial Arts and Home Economics headquarters, and from then until 1965, grade 7 and 8 students from all city schools came to Kitchener Street School to take these classes. The school closed in June, 1974, and was demolished in April, 1975.

Glenview School (1909 - 1970)

This school was opened on February 3, 1909, on Terrace Avenue in Glenview, or "Silvertown" as it was called because of the many silver electroplating firms which were located in the area. The two room red-brick schoolhouse was named Glenview School because it commanded a beautiful view of the Gorge. Thirty-one students were enrolled in the first year of Glenview School, and Miss Kate Durdan was its first principal. A second storey with two classrooms was added to the school in 1920. Glenview School was closed in 1970, and demolished in 1971 to make way for an apartment complex.

Lundy's Lane School (c. 1829 - 1954); S. S. Number Five

Built around 1829, the Lundy's Lane School, or Green's Corners School as it was also called, was located at the north-east corner of the junction of Green's Corners (now Montrose Road) and Lundy's Lane, on the grounds of the Methodist Red Meeting House. A new building was constructed in 1871 and this was used as the schoolhouse until 1915, when it was replaced by a two-room brick building. The Lundy's Lane School, operated until 1954, when Greendale School was opened. The building now houses the offices of the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Niagara Falls.

John Marshall School (1909-1969; new school, 1969-present)

Originally built in 1850, it was called S.S. Number Four, Stamford, as it was in the fourth school section. This old school was replaced by a 4-room brick school which was built on St. Peter's Ave in 1909. An addition of four rooms was constructed in 1925, and in 1944, the school required a wooden annex and two portable classrooms. In the 1950's and 1960's, overcrowding necessitated the use of basement classrooms. The opening of Senior Schools during this time partially alleviated the situation, but by 1969, the school proved incapable of accommodating all of the students. John Marshall School was demolished in August of 1969, and a new school bearing the same name was built on St. James Avenue and opened in September of that year.

Victoria School (1918-1979; new school, 1979-present)

The original schoolhouse which serviced the "Half-way" area was a one room log building erected in "Thompson's Bush." The year of its construction is unknown, but it served as a school until 1880, when it burned down. A new school was built on the same location, at the corner of Portage Road and Stanley Street. This schoolhouse was a wooden frame structure which was replaced in 1918 with a new brick building. The new structure had two classrooms, an assembly hall, and recreation rooms in the basement. It celebrated its official opening on February 1, 1918. The school was officially named Victoria in 1927, shortly before the addition of three more classrooms.

Over the years, the school became increasingly inadequate for its growing enrollment, and thus, a decision was made to build a new school on a 3.8 acre site between Church's Lane and

Heritage Drive. This school was a one-storey structure with six classrooms, a kindergarten, and a library. On December 10, 1979, the staff and students of Victoria School moved from the old school to the new one. The old school building was purchased by the Greek-Canadian Cultural Association in 1980. It underwent extensive renovations and was opened as a Greek Cultural Centre in 1983.

Maple Street School (1914-present)

Maple Street School was built in 1914 on Maple Street to serve the rapidly growing population in the area west of Victoria Avenue. Four classrooms were added to the school in 1919. By 1924, the school was again so overcrowded that ten additional classrooms were opened in the Orange Hall on Victoria Avenue. These classes ceased when Maple Street School was enlarged to 16 rooms, sometime before 1935. With this addition, it became the largest public school in Welland County, with a peak enrolment of 700 students. In 1965, Maple Street School became the Senior School of the area. A library and gymnasium were added, and existing classrooms were converted into rooms for Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Art and Music. In the fall of 1981, Maple Street School once again became an elementary school.

Memorial School (1922-1981)

Built on Spring Street, Memorial School was named by its students who felt that it would be an appropriate name to honour the 176th battalion, the "Niagara Rangers," on whose training grounds the school was built, and also for the local men who were killed in World War I. The school was named on December 10, 1921, and the 8-room schoolhouse was officially opened by Lord Byng, then Governor General of Canada, on April 22, 1922. In 1929, six classrooms and an auditorium were added to the school. A sundial dedicated to the 15 former Memorial students who had died in World War II was unveiled on November 11, 1946. The school was closed in 1981 as a result of declining enrolment. This building is now the home of the A. C. McCallum Branch 479 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Drummond Road School (1925-1981)

This school was a four-room, two storey brick schoolhouse, which was opened on September 14, 1925. At the time, it had an enrolment of 91 students, and only two of its four classrooms were occupied. However, the population of the school grew rapidly, and in 1948, the school was enlarged to 11 rooms. Drummond Road School was closed due to declining enrolment in 1981, and the building has since been converted into apartments.

Diamond Jubilee School (1927-present)

Originally a four room brick schoolhouse, Diamond Jubilee was built on Dorchester Road in 1927, the Diamond Jubilee of Canada. An addition was required by 1949, and a separate structure consisting of six rooms was constructed beside the main building.

Valley Way, on Valley Way was built in 1951; *James Morden*, on Dorchester Road, in 1952; *Greendale*, on Montrose Road, in 1954; *Martha Cullimore*, on St. Andrew's Street, in 1955; *Orchard Park*, on Dorchester Road North, in 1959; *Heximer*, on Heximer Street, in 1960; *Cherrywood Acres*, on Pettit Avenue, in 1965; and *Battlefield*, on Barker Street, in 1971.

Senior Schools

Established by the School Board in 1953, three Senior Schools were built in the city to alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the elementary schools. Princess Elizabeth was built in

1953, Princess Margaret in 1955, and Prince Philip in 1961.

In 1981, Princess Margaret became an elementary school for students in kindergarten to grade eight. Princess Elizabeth was closed on June 24, 1986, as a result of declining enrolment. The building was used as the School Board's Education Centre, until 1991, when Ecole LaMarsh opened in September. This school was the Niagara South Board of Education's first bilingual school. Prince Philip remains open as a Senior School, serving grades six, seven and eight.

