

HIGH SCHOOLS

Drummondville Grammar School

In 1856 the Clergy Reserve Fund of the Stamford Township Hall was used to purchase the Leonard property, two acres of land and a house built in the 1820's. The first 'high school' in Welland County was opened in the old home of Major Richard Leonard in 1857, which was located on Drummond Road near Lundy's Lane. The school was called the Drummondville Grammar School and was the forerunner of Stamford C.V.I. In 1870, the name was changed from the Drummondville Grammar School to the Drummondville High School. The name was again changed to Niagara Falls South High School in 1882, when Drummondville was incorporated as the Village of Niagara Falls (South). The Niagara Falls South High School became so overcrowded by the early 1890's, that a new structure was built south of the original building. The opening of Niagara Falls Collegiate in 1893 also helped to alleviate the crowded classrooms. The Drummondville Grammar School was converted into a residence for the headmaster and caretaker of the High School, and was used as the headquarters of the Stamford Red Cross during World War II, and later as offices for the Stamford and (after amalgamation) Niagara Falls Board of Education. The name of the school was officially changed from Niagara Falls South High School to Stamford Collegiate in 1907.

School attendance increased rapidly, especially in the years following World War II. By 1956, as Stamford Collegiate celebrated its centennial, three shifts of class time were required to accommodate all of the students. The opening of A.N. Myer in 1957, and Westlane in 1960 relieved the situation temporarily. In 1962, Westlane shared its facilities with the students from Stamford, while the latter school was being enlarged and rebuilt. In order to make room for the expansion, the Drummondville Grammar School was moved to the west side of the new Stamford Collegiate. To allow further expansion in 1965, the old School house was demolished. 1973 saw the addition of a larger library, physics lab, guidance complex and sewing room. Although the present school is very different from the original Drummondville Grammar School, Stamford Collegiate remains the oldest secondary educational institution in Niagara Falls.

Niagara Falls Collegiate (1893-present)

Niagara Falls Collegiate, as Niagara Falls Secondary School was originally called, opened in September, 1893 with eight classrooms and just under 100 students. Niagara Falls Collegiate was located in the centre of Wesley Park, in an area which was also once known as Bender's Bush. In 1901, work began on the construction of a gymnasium which resembled a large red barn, which was replaced with a two-storey gymnasium and auditorium complex in 1918. This structure was condemned in 1938, torn down in 1945, and replaced with the present gymnasium, auditorium, and cafeteria complex which was built in 1949.

During the mid 1910's, Niagara Falls Collegiate added commercial courses, and the study of agriculture, domestic sciences, shop mathematics and mechanical drawing. In the following years, the number of students taking such vocational courses had increased so much that a new technical wing was needed. This was erected in 1920, and the school name was changed to Niagara Falls Collegiate and Vocational Institute. The technical wing was followed by a new academic wing in 1928. In 1954, the school underwent major renovations; the old bell tower was removed and the academic and technical wings of the school were connected. The population of the school continued to grow, and by the 1960's, a peak enrolment of 1100 students necessitated more additions. In 1967, a third gym, new library, staff lounges and classrooms were added.

In the 1970's, however, enrolment at Niagara Falls Collegiate and Vocational Institute began to decline rapidly. By the 1980's, attendance was so low that the school board decided to close the school in 1982. As a result of considerable opposition from students and alumni, however, the board reversed its decision, and N.F.C.V. I. remained open.

When the provincial government decided to extend full funding to Catholic High Schools, the Niagara South Board of Education decided to transfer Lord Elgin Secondary School to the Separate School Board. In the late 1980's, Lord Elgin was transferred to N.F.C.V.I, and the academic students at N.F.C.V.I were dispersed throughout the remaining city high schools. In September 1990, Niagara Falls Collegiate and Vocational Institute, after serving the city for almost 100 years, became Niagara Falls Secondary School. As Niagara Falls Secondary School, it celebrated the 100th anniversary of its establishment in 1993.

A.N. Myer Secondary School (1957-present)

A.N. Myer Secondary School, located on O'Neil Street, was named after a long-time principal of Stamford Collegiate. It was built in 1957 and had 16 rooms. A new wing was opened in January, 1967, which housed a library, music room, and various classrooms, bringing the total number of instructional classrooms to 42. In 1973, the school was further enlarged. A new double gym, seminar rooms, 4 shops, 2 home economics rooms, 2 art rooms, 4 geography rooms, and 4 business rooms were added. When this 21 room complex was opened, the area covered by A.N. Myer Secondary School increased to 141,000 square feet, making it one of the largest schools in the Niagara area.

Westlane Secondary School (1960-present)

Westlane Secondary School was so named because it was situated on Pitton Road, just off the western section of Lundy's Lane. It was opened in 1960, but required an addition in 1963. At that time, eight classrooms, four shops and a science room was added to the school. In September, 1967, seven more classrooms, a cafeteria and a library were added to Westlane, and the existing gym was enlarged. Westlane introduced a semestered class schedule in 1976.

Lord Elgin Vocational Institute (1967-1989)

Lord Elgin was opened in September, 1967, on Valley Way. It was a vocational school which offered two-year training programs to prepare students for employment in various trades. The school was initially so successful that in October, 1968, an \$800,000 addition was approved which would increase the capacity of the school by 192 students. In 1989, Lord Elgin school was transferred to the Welland County Separate School Board, which renamed it St. Michael's Secondary School. Vocational training for students in the city was transferred to N.F.C.V.I, which opened as Niagara Falls Secondary School in September, 1990.