

## **K-12 Education in The Pas**

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### **Early Steps**

The history of Education in The Pas predates the incorporation of the town and the inclusion of this part of the world in Manitoba. The Pas school district was first to be organized in Northern Manitoba.

White children had to attend the Indian School where Mr. Bagshaw was the teacher. When the Indians moved across the Saskatchewan River, the white residents organized in 1909 and elected a school board. Mr. Bagshaw was the secretary and Mr. J. G. Rosser, successor to Mr. G. Halcrow, manager of the Hudson Bay Company store, was the treasurer. As there was no school building, school was taught in various places such as Halcrow's pool-room and the old Hudson's Bay company store (at First St. W. and Fischer Ave.). This was only a temporary arrangement.

### **Larose School**



Mr. Halcrow, the first school board chairman, was also a builder. He obtained lumber and with free labour had the first school built in 1910. This school later used by the new The Pas School board was located on Larose Avenue and so was called Larose School. It was later moved north of The Pas to Big Eddy for use by the non-Treaty Indians.

There were 83 children of thirty-six families enrolled between 1901 – 1912. The Larose Avenue School was an up-to-date one for the time. Money was raised from a grant from the government of the North West Territories - \$200.00 annually. Fifty-six parents and business firms made contributions towards the upkeep of the school. Box socials, generally held on the night the train from Hudson Bay Junction laid over, helped and a liberal annual subscription was given by the first Mayor, Mr. Herman Finger. Mr. Finger was preparing to build the Finger Lumber Company which later became The Pas Lumber Company.

### **The Pas School District**

In May, 1912, The Pas was incorporated as a population of approximately five hundred people. There were no roads, no sidewalks, and no modern conveniences. Believing The Pas would rapidly increase in population and require better school facilities, Dr. Elliott and a few others undertook to establish a school district, organized under the regulations of the Dept. of Education in the Province of Manitoba following the extension of the boundary.

The election for members was held in August 23, 1912. Elected were C.H. Anderson, banker; Dr. H. H. Elliott, physician; H.S. Johnson, manager of the Hudson's Bay Company Store. These three men constituted the first public school board at The Pas. At the first board meeting, Mr. Anderson was selected as chairman. Mr. David Clapp was given position of Secretary-Treasurer. An Arts graduate and a former public school inspector in Ontario made him an asset to the Board which he served until his death some fifteen years later.

At the second meeting August, an initial budget of \$5000 was applied for from the Council of the Town of The Pas. At the third meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>, a resolution authorized the secretary to advertise for tenders for erection of a new school. It was also decided to advertise for an assistant teacher to begin November 1<sup>st</sup>. At the fourth meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup>, the tender of Coyle and Guymer for \$900 for work and material for the new school was accepted as was the application of Miss Edith McLaughlin at a salary of \$750 per annum to assist Mr. Fiddler, who was the principal. As there were a number of Indian children who desired to attend the public school, the Board passed resolution stating that "Indian children be admitted to school at \$2.00 per month".

The estimate of expenditures for the school year 1913-14 was \$4,130. In January, 1914, six trustees were elected, two from each ward. Ward One: H.S. Johnson, G. Halcrow; Ward Two: D.C. Burton, F. Barker; Ward Three: Andrew Johnson and J.P. Jackson.

For the 1914-15 school term, the Board hired the following teachers: Miss Jeanette Babb – 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant at \$750; Miss Annie A. Campbell – 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant at \$750; and Miss Mary Duncan – Principal at \$1000. Miss Velma Bickle later replaced one of the assistants. The 1914-15 estimate was placed at \$9000, but due to the protests of the Council it was reduced to \$7500.



### **Armstrong School**

Negotiations were started with the Dept. of Indian Affairs for the acquisition of a permanent school site which resulted in the acceptance in April, 1913 of the north portion of Block 50 (present site of provincial building) on which to erect a four school room school. This building, build at a cost of \$900 for labour and materials was called Armstrong School, and had the latest features such as windows on both sides, a platform for the teacher and a blackboard.

## Fingerville School



On July 21, 1914, Coyle and Hughes were given the contract for building Fingerville School at \$1065. Fingerville School was located on First St. East between Head Avenue and Crossley Avenue within the area known locally as Fingerville.

Thus by 1915, three school buildings had been constructed in The Pas: Larose School built in 1910, Armstrong School, and Fingerville School built at a cost of \$1065 in 1914.

## The Pas School



In August, 1915, contracts were given for the construction of a large new school for The Pas. Smith Brothers and Wilson of Regina constructed the building for \$33,800 and A. T. Engelbertson supplied the plumbing for \$9,225. The architect was G. N. Taylor who was paid 5% of the whole cost. In February, 1916, the students moved into this fine new

eight-roomed red brick building, occupying only three rooms, however. For several years, this building's construction was seen as a financial blunder and "white elephant". The minute book of the year 1916-17, indicates that the Hudson's Bay Company provided a large school bell. For the next 57 years that school bell would regulate the comings and goings of students in The Pas as it tolled the start of each session of the school day. And in 1974, when the red brick building was torn down, the bell was removed and placed in safe keeping. In the mid-1990s it was proposed by the high school principal that the bell be mounted inside the Margaret Barbour Collegiate Institute as a memento of the origin of the first high school classes in Northern Manitoba.

This 1916 red brick building, officially called The Pas School, underwent a number of name changes over the years. It was called The Pas Elementary in the early 1960s and renamed Mary Duncan Elementary in the late 1960s. In 1971, the building was an appendix of Kelsey Elementary School and was called the "Red Brick Site", and in 1972-73 it came under the principalship of the Sacred Heart School before the students of both schools were amalgamated in 1973 in the new Mary Duncan Elementary School. But regardless of what the official name was, it was usually called the "Red Brick" and indeed many townspeople and even teachers knew it by no other name.

### **The Annexes**

The Pas' school system had grown since 1912 from a one room school to a seventeen room institution with the maximum school expenditure of \$35,574 during 1931-32, the highest in the history of the school district. To accommodate all the pupils, now numbering 600, it was necessary to construct two temporary frame school buildings, one on each side of the main red brick building with the eight classrooms. When constructed, one of these annexes held three classrooms and the other held five. They were without running water and used wood stoves in each classroom for heat. This temporary arrangement lasted until the early 1960s when they were torn down as a result of the building of two new elementary schools in the southern end of The Pas.

### **Big Eddy School**

A few miles north of The Pas, the Big Eddy School District No. 2240 was formed in 1933. The first school building brought from The Pas was one of the original three which fulfilled the area's school needs. This school building had been in operation for many years before the district was formed. In December, 1933, Inspector J. S. Peach reported that there were eleven pupils in grade one and five pupils in grade two. All of them were either Metis or non-treaty Indian children. The school in 1935 was under the charge of Walter C. Lundie who had been there for thirteen years. By then, he had completed forty-seven years of teaching experience in spite of the fact that he was a permit teacher, having had no formal teacher training and only had a grade eight academic standing himself.

With the building of the "red brick" building in 1915, The Pas then owned four units – a large new eight-room brick building, (The Pas School) and three one-room school units. Eventually, the three frame buildings were sold. The building on Larose Avenue, Larose School, was sold to the provincial government for use as a school house at Big Eddy. The Armstrong School was sold to the Anglican Parish of Christ Church and remained in this location (the present site of MacDonald's Restaurant at the corner of First Street West and Edwards Avenue) to be used as a parish hall. It was subsequently enlarged but eventually replaced with the present hall next to the church. The Fingerville School was sold to the Salvation Army and was moved onto Edwards Avenue across from the then Opasquia Hotel (now the Town Centre Hotel). It also was enlarged and for years was used by the Salvation Army. It is now a commercial business building.

On January 8, 1917, the school board minutes indicate that the Board of Trade at The Pas requested the trustees engage a male principal. The request was acceded to and in September that year a Mr. Jonasson took charge at a salary of \$1400 per year. This also marked the beginning of high school work in The Pas as the "red brick" The Pas School took on the status of an "Intermediate School". In September 1917, the enrollment had increased to 162 students. After two years at the task, Mr. Jonasson was followed as principal by Miss Margaret E. Ross.

By 1920-21, the school district estimate was set at \$15,000. The principal was paid \$1800, the assistant principal \$1500, and the six classroom teachers received \$1200, each per year. The caretaker also received \$1200. By the fall of 1921 enrollment had risen to 208 with thirteen pupils enrolled in grades nine, ten and eleven.

### **Public High School Education**



Up to 1927, the “Intermediate” status of The Pas School entitled the School District to a secondary grant as a one-room high school. For the next three years it was classified as a “High School” with two teachers doing the secondary work. In the fall of 1930, grade twelve was begun for the first time in The Pas – and this was the first grade twelve class in Northern Manitoba. After two years, the school changed its status

from a “Collegiate Department” to a “Collegiate Institute” having progressed from a three-room to a four-room secondary school.

In 1929-30, under principalship of Mr. A. L. Mills, the school was reorganized on a Junior-Senior High School basis. The teaching staff at the grade eight to twelve level grew from five in 1932-32 to six in 1932-33. By 1934-35, there were seven teachers and over 200 students in the high school department. The elementary division consisted of ten classes with over 400 students. It appeared that unless there should be a great influx of population into The Pas, the school system had reached its highest peak of expansion with about 600 students.

### **Carrot Valley Schools**

There were also two rural schools established in what is now the Carrot Valley. Carrot Valley School was on the farm owned by John Jaeger, located 25 kilometres from The Pas on the P.T.H. #283 West. The other school, called “The Moffat School”, was named for school inspector Moffat, who was in charge of rural schools at that time. During that period, the rural schools were run under different supervision than the town schools and operated independent of The Pas School District.

### **Sacred Heart School**



The Pas was one of the few places in Manitoba that had a private Roman Catholic school. The Sacred Heart School was organized as early as January, 1912 when The Pas was still situated in the North-West

Territories, before the extension of the boundary of Manitoba to the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel. The Grey Nuns operated it in what was formerly the residence of Bishop Ovide Charlebois.

In December, 1914, forty-six ratepayers petitioned the School Board for a Roman Catholic bilingual teacher as allowed for in the Public School Act. This request was granted and for over a year, the arrangement continued. The next year, however, in a disagreement with the Principal, Mary Duncan, the Catholics withdrew their children and began the Sacred Heart School. The permanent structure was built in 1916 as a six room frame and stucco school building and enlarged in 1929. This school cost \$30,000 and was financed by the Roman Catholic Church and wholly maintained by the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish as no financial assistance was received from the government.

In August 1918 six nuns of the order of the Presentation of Mary arrived at The Pas to take over operation of the school. In 1934-35, there were 182 pupils enrolled in grades one to eight and another 17 pupils enrolled in the school's commercial course. The regular elementary curriculum as well as religion was taught. In the commercial course, the students were taught bookkeeping, shorthand, typewriting, commercial arithmetic, commercial law, business English and spelling. This was the only commercial course offered in Northern Manitoba and by 1935 about 60 students had completed it.

From the earliest days, there had been a very tolerant feeling in The Pas towards the "Separate School". Students from the Sacred Heart School would transfer to the public school to continue into high school so as to obtain their matriculation standing. On the other hand, many of the public school graduates, after completing grade eleven or twelve, would go to Sacred Heart for the Commercial Course offered there and would easily find employment locally. The public school trustees offered the services of their attendance officer so that attendance may be regular.

For many years Sacred Heart School served the needs of parochial students in The Pas, eventually expanding to offer some high school classes towards graduation. During a few of its last years, the elementary building was operated by the Kelsey School Division during the late 1960s rapid expansion of The Pas with the coming of the pulp and paper industry to town. But economics and changing attitudes eventually forced the closing of the Sacred Heart School. After lying empty during 1973-74, having sent its 250 students to the new Mary Duncan Elementary, it and its sister facility, the "Red Brick" school, were torn down in 1974.

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