

1854. I also agree to fence the lot with cedar posts and pickets on the same plan of William Mitchell's adjoining lots, and if not completed at the time mentioned, for the time mentioned for the house, shall be done as soon as possible after, also to build two privies 4 feet wide by 6 feet long, 6 feet high, to be done with rough stuff. The said School House to have seats and desks suitable for a common School House.

"Dated this 4th day of June 1853.

(Signed)

"Joseph White

"James Ackers and Timothy P. Simmons, Trustees No. 10

"Rawdon

"William Armstrong, Witness"

This simple school house, which was, no doubt, an improvement over log school houses of several decades before, was still a far cry from the almost opulent school house to come. The school house built in 1853-1854 was used to educate at least two generations of scholars; by the mid 1870s a new much grander edifice was being considered for the Charlotte Street location. (Charlotte Street was the name given to that section of Church Street between North Street and Emily Street now Station Street.)

The 1879-1880 Directory of the County of Hastings has this to say about the village's educational institution. (Misspellings and punctuation are left as in the original.)

"Its facilities for education are excellent, possessing one of the best graded schools in the country, with an efficient staff of four teachers under the management of a United Board of High and Public School Trustees. The school house, a handsome two story brick building, 60 X 40 feet was erected in 1874 at a cost of \$6,000. The grounds 1½ acres in extent are made beautiful and ornamented with shade trees, shrubbery, and flowers, and the play grounds are supplied with gymnasiums and other means for healthy amusement."

Although the article says four teachers were employed, the same directory gives only James W. Rodgers as a teacher.

In the late 1870s, interest in setting up a high school was renewed. Stirling had a high school of some sort prior to the 1870s. A leaflet published for the 1892 autumn session claims the high school was established in 1858; to date it's unclear what happened but for some reason it was closed. In 1887 the new high school was opened with an enrollment of 25 pupils.



Stirling Public School 1874-1950

The leaflet also proclaimed Stirling High School as the first high school in North Hastings. Further it says: "Though but five years since re-establishment, the School stands well up in the list of High Schools and Collegiate Institutes of the Province." It appears the village was without a high school for a period of at least five years. Because of the name, "United Board of High and Public School Trustees," it is possible that high school classes were taught in part of the public school.

At its "reopening" in 1887 the school had an enrollment of slightly more than two dozen students.

A 1911 addition included washrooms, four additional classrooms and a large entry. The 1936 addition provided students with a home economics room, a shop, a gymnasium, a board room, a washroom and showers. Between 1940 and the mid-1950s other improvements were made. By the early 1960s it was decided Stirling needed a new high school building. Construction started after the demolition of most of King George High; the 1936 addition which is on the east side of the school was incorporated into the new building.

The elegant structure raised in 1874 was considered too small and times demanded newer facilities for educating Stirling's younger students. In 1950 the old Public School was demolished making way for an up-to-date building which housed a playroom, a teachers' room, a principal's office, an examination room (for doctors and nurses to treat children who became ill), and washrooms. (I remember the "playroom" being used for Grade 6 classes. It was also the site for meetings of the Boy Scouts and also served as a general "auditorium" for infrequent educational movie or radio presentations.) This building now serves as Stirling Primary School.

An additional school building was constructed on St. James Street in 1973-1974; it is now called Stir-