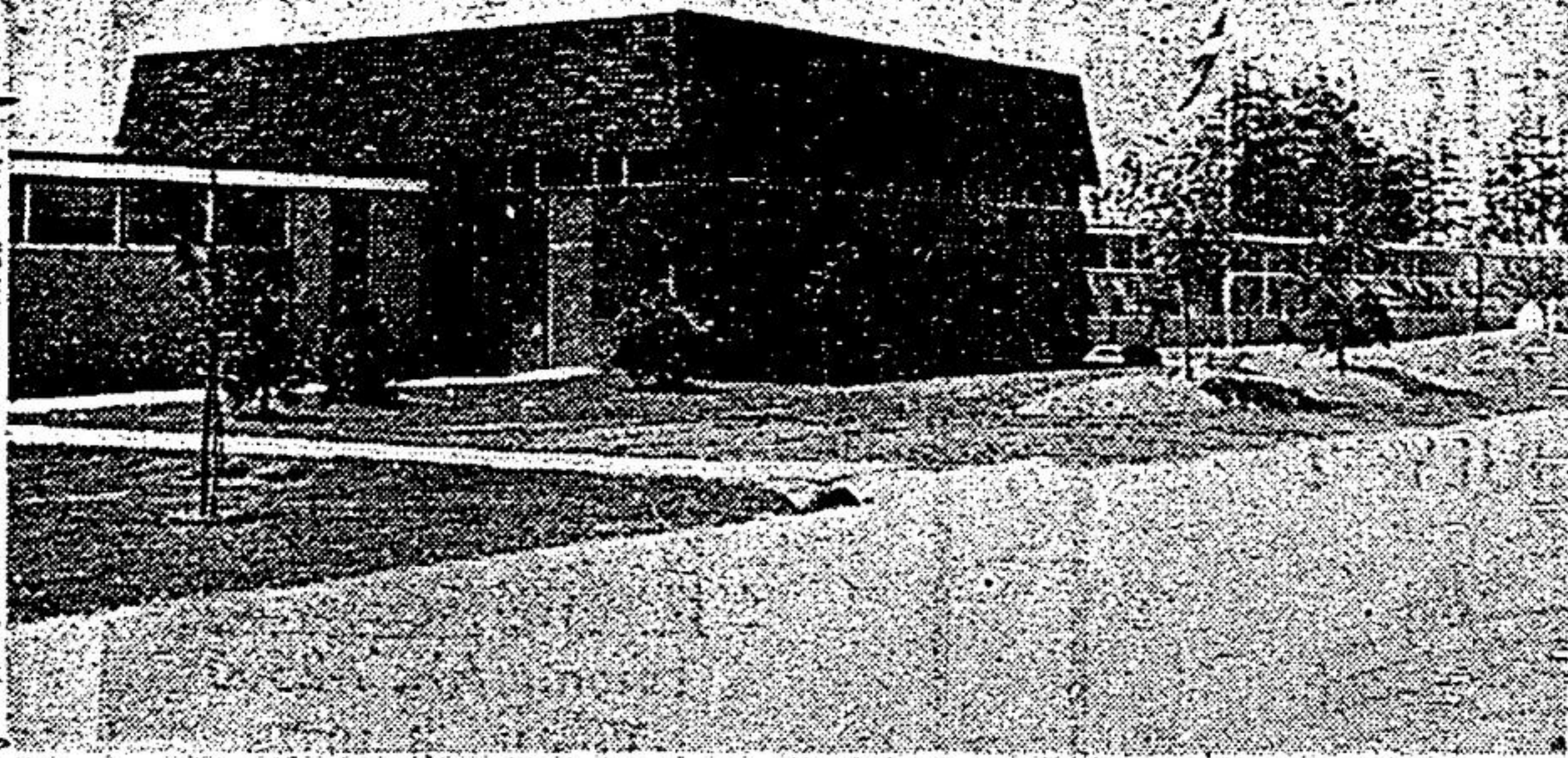


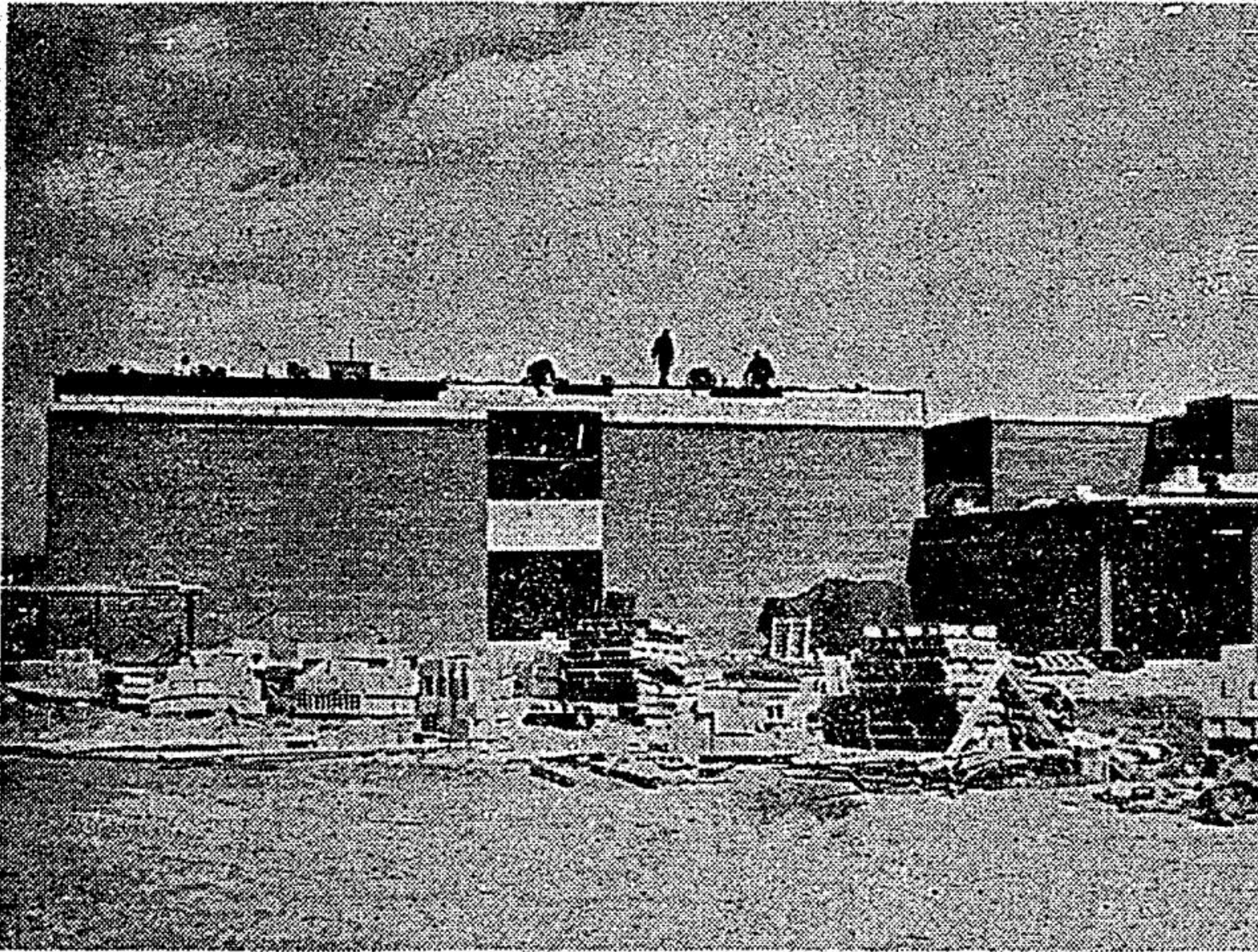
# Schools Had Painful Beginning



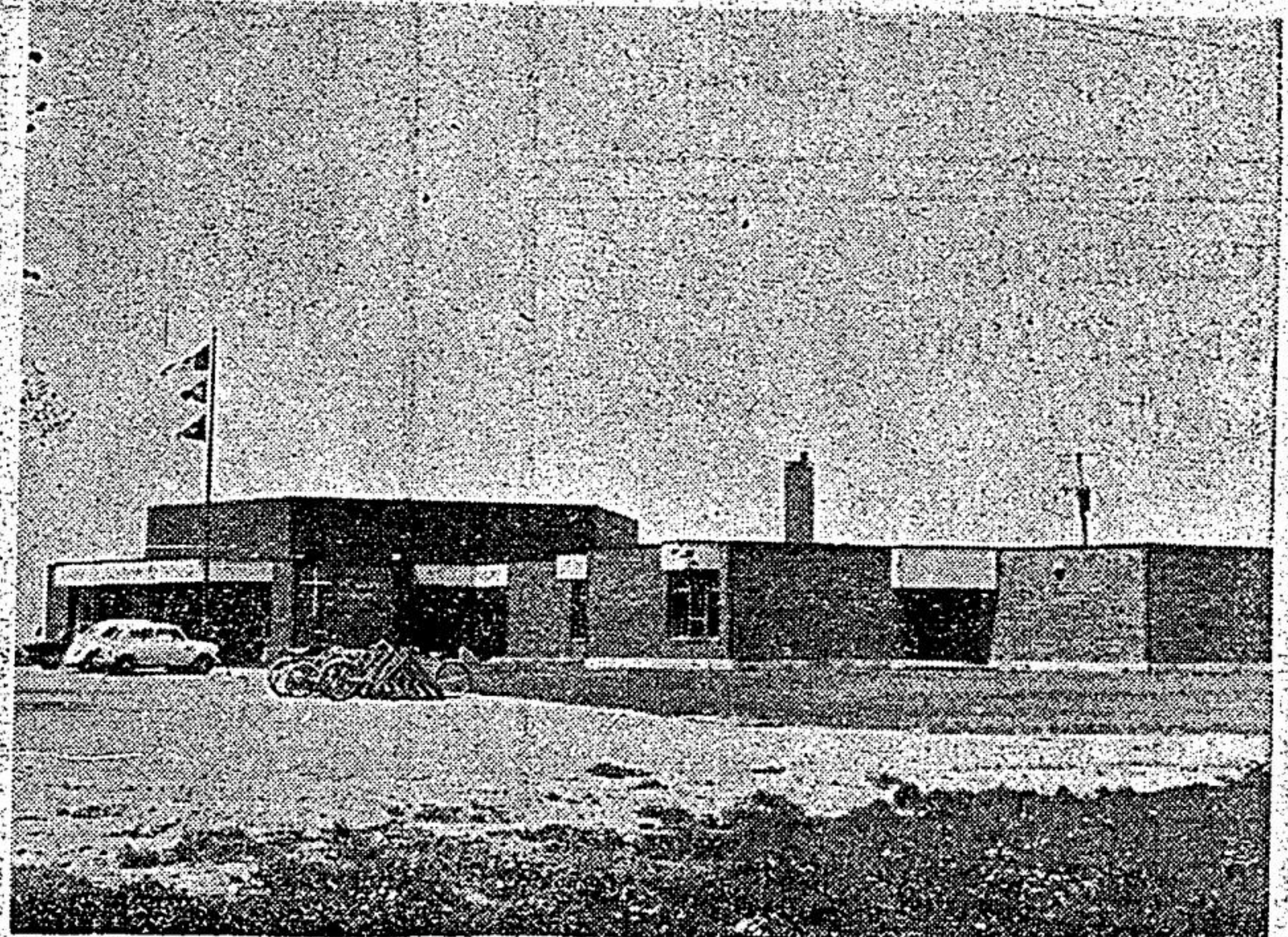
Orchard Park Public School.



Summitview Public School.



Stouffville District High School.



St. Mark's Separate School.

## Four Schools Now Fifth Is Planned

Earliest records of education in Stouffville tell of a one-room school located on what is now Church St. As 1900 approached the school was located south of the present Summitview School. This building burned in 1916 and was replaced by the present structure. One of the earliest principals of the school who will still be remembered by some of the town's oldest, was the late James Hand, a competent educator but a stern taskmaster. Before 1916 the school added what was known as Continuation School where pupils could continue on from public school to their Junior Matriculation. If further education was desired it was necessary to go to Markham, the nearest High School.

In the rural area surrounding the village, the first schools were rough log structures, crudely chinked and plastered, with un-

planned plank floors and devoid of maps, globes and all the modern apparatus of education. The desks were homemade and they ranged along the wall.

School life languished in the summer months, but when the fall frosts prevented further field labour the bigger boys and the girls and often young men and women came flocking back to school.

As in town, school government was usually despotic, not to say tyrannical, but the presence of a number of older pupils often introduced a democratic element which helped modify the rigor of the master's rule.

**Early Schooling Hard**  
In the early beginnings, teaching was excruciating for the pupil and demoralizing for the teacher. Teachers received less than \$400 a year and comforts in school buildings were unknown.

There were two heating systems—the stove, which roasted those who had to sit near it, and the birch rod, which roasted pretty well generally.

Education was an unfortunate necessity and the aim seems to have been to make it as grim as possible.

Many of the little one-room schools which dotted the countryside were not so much beacons of knowledge as they were unitive establishments for the correction of wayward youth. Paper was scarce so the majority of the class had to scratch their lessons on slates.

**Standards Low**  
If the state of equipment left much to be desired, so did the quality of the teaching. Anyone could teach as long as he was a British subject. Early reports tell us that only one in ten was qualified to teach even the youngest children. In addition to the pittance they were paid for their services, many went home each day to their boarding places to do chores at the end of the day.

Learning meant memorizing facts. Whether a pupil learned to think was unim-

portant. Even before 1900, the high cost of education made headlines. The school board was kept in line by public opinion and council deeply resented handing over money over which it had no control.

**First Addition**  
The first of a long line of school additions came to the present Summitview School in the 1930's and consisted of three rooms on the southwest corner of the building. Excavation for the two storey structure was done by a team of horses and a turnpike shovel, and the cost of the whole project would not build one room at today's figures. It built two classrooms and the first gymnasium, a basement room with tarvia floor. It later became a room for extra classes. Some years later another three rooms were added to the southeast corner and household science was introduced to high school.

Today Stouffville has 3 public schools with another forecast for the northeast section of town. One of the three present schools is a separate school, erected only a few years ago. Full-fledged High School

Stouffville battled long and hard with the Department of Education for the establishment of the local District High School. The chief municipal supporter was the Township of Whitchurch, a large area of which is served by the school. In 1950 the Department of Education had come out strong in favour of high school areas. Stouffville wanted a school and so did Markham and at one time it appeared that one might be built near Dickson's Hill to serve both municipalities. However, both of the towns prevailed, but not before some bitterness developed over the whole affair.

The Stouffville District School built on ten acres of ground purchased from the Lambert Stouffer farm is presently receiving its latest and last addition, a million dollar two-storey enlargement on the north and front of the building.

**Expensive Battle**  
The big battle today is who is going to pay for the fantastic rate of construction and the annual skyrocketing of teachers' salaries. The municipalities say they cannot continue

and the provincial government has not seen fit so far to take on the load.

Architects see schools of the future as high-rise constructions operating the year-round to cope with the vast numbers now seeking education.

In a hundred years education has become a life-time experience and a joyful discovery instead of an instrument of torture.

### First Council 1873

The first council for Markham Village met in January 1873 at the Franklin Hall. County Judge Boyd received the declaration and qualifications of the new members who took their seats as follows: James Speight, reeve; John Jerman, T. A. Milne, Hugh Megill and H. Tane.

The first business was the appointment of H. R. Corson as clerk-treasurer, at a salary of \$50, J. Robinson as assessor at \$20 and Geo. Digby as Inspector of Houses of Public Entertainment at 50c per certificate granted.