

The Beginnings of Neil Campbell School

The creation of Neil Campbell School can be traced to an agreement signed between the then Municipality of East Kildonan and the BACM [a land development company] in April 1954. The agreement gave the company all of the municipally owned land in the area between from Neil Avenue north to Leighton Avenue from Roch to Raleigh. The company was given the right to develop the area for residential, commercial and industrial development. The company was to provide all of the local improvements required such as sewer and water, street paving, paved sidewalks and streetlights.

As this area prior to this development was lightly dotted with homes, no elementary school existed in this district; students living in the present Neil Campbell School area went to school at either Lord Wolseley School or Prince Edward School. The development company as part of its agreement was required to build at its own expense a new eight room elementary school costing approximately \$120,000.00 and then turn it over to the East Kildonan School District. The first location that was looked at for this new school was the east side of Watt Street between Hazel Dell Avenue and Oakview Avenue but the decision was soon made to move the location one block to the east on Golspie.

The building of the new homes in the immediate catchment area of Neil Campbell School began in 1955 in the 400 blocks of Kimberly, Helmsdale, Dunrobin, Oakview, Linden, Greene and Roberta. Home construction in the 500 blocks began in 1956, the construction of new homes in the 600 blocks were in 1957, 1958 and 1959.

Prior to 1955 there had been a small number of homes on these streets, but as well there were homes on the south side of the 600 block of Oakview to the power lines as well as one house in the 600 block of Hazel Dell. These two 600 blocks were eliminated when Neil Campbell School was built. Some of the old homes in the 400, 500 blocks and 600 blocks that still exist today date to the early 1920's when Oakview Avenue east of Henderson Highway was called Hawarden Avenue and Hazel Dell Avenue east of Henderson Highway was called Donegal Avenue. These streets were changed to their present names in the late 1920's. Most of what is now the school grounds was used as a grazing area for a small number of cattle.

The clearing of the land needed for Neil Campbell and the removal of some of the old buildings began in the spring of 1956 with construction beginning in late May. It was first hoped that the school would be ready for September 1956 but this plan was soon found to be impracticable.

The first students of Neil Campbell began the school year 1956-1957 in either Lord Wolseley School, four classes or Prince Edward School, four classes. These students started the school year with the same teacher and same classmates that they would be with at Neil Campbell. On Friday November 16, 1956, these original 246 students of Neil

Campbell School along with their 8 teachers spent their last day at their old school and on Monday November 19, 1956 they moved into the new eight room Neil Campbell School.

The Neil Campbell of 1956 consisted of just the middle section of the present building. The gym and the 2 storey section were added in 1959. The library, the multipurpose room and the southern end were added in the 1968-1969 school year just in time for the introduction of kindergarten in September 1969. The present hallway to the library was originally the office area and the present office space was a classroom prior to the 1968-1969 addition.

The original staff of Neil Campbell School consisted of Principal Marion Anderson who also was the teacher for 31 grade six students; her total salary was \$4,265.00 for the year. This class started the year at Lord Wolseley School. Marion Anderson remained at Neil Campbell until June 1959 when Charles E. Douglas took over, he was to remain as principal until June 1988.

Kathryn Harper taught 24 grade one student at a salary of \$2,100.00 and the class began at Prince Edward School.

Elizabeth Loeffler taught 30 grade one students, her salary was \$2,740.00 and her class began the year at Lord Wolseley

Nancy Wells was the teacher for 32 grade two students, she made \$2,440.00 for the year and her class began at Prince Edward.

Ada Allen also taught grade two, her class consisted of 33 students, she made \$3,725.00 and the class came from Prince Edward.

Marion Schick taught a class of 35 grade three students at a salary of \$2,820.00, her class started at Lord Wolseley.

Blanche Erickson taught the grade four students, 24 students in all at a salary of \$2,440.00, her class began at Lord Wolseley.

Laura Asselstine taught 37 grade five students at a salary of \$3,665.00, the class began at Prince Edward School.