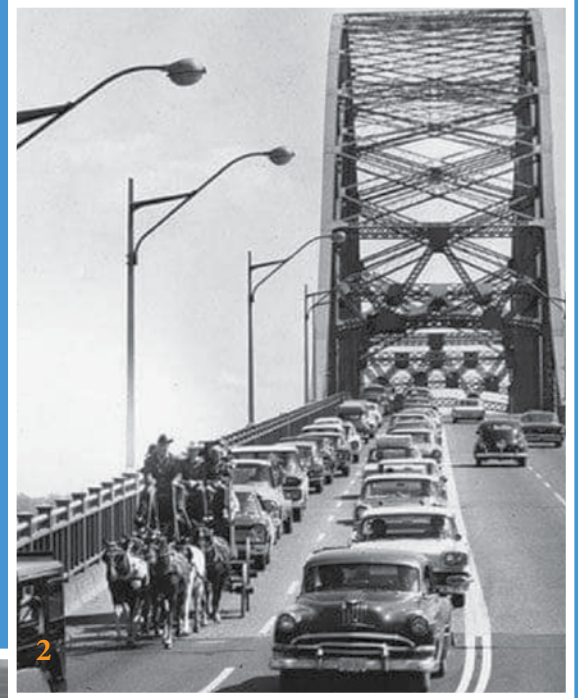


SNAPSHOTS 2

Developments in the Surrey School District in the 1950s



**Front cover photo credits:*

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| 1. Trustee Lena Shaw, 1957. Courtesy of Surrey Archives 91.5.72 | 6. Newton Schoolboy Traffic Patrol, May 1951. Courtesy of Surrey Archives NC219A-E |
| 2. Pattullo Bridge 1950s. Courtesy of Basil King, New Westminster Archives | 7. Teacher Inger Novik. Courtesy of Surrey Archives NC808B |
| 3. White Rock Parade, 1950s. Courtesy of White Rock Museum and Archives | 8. Surrey School Board Office, 1951. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 2013.0050.32 |
| 4. J.T. Brown School (1967). Courtesy of Surrey Archives SMA81.042.38 | 9. Mary Jane Shannon (192?). Courtesy of Surrey Archives 170S10A |
| 5. An intermediate class from K.B. Woodward Elementary, 1957. Courtesy of Surrey Archives 2023.00 | |

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To recognize the Surrey Retired Teachers' Association's 30th anniversary in 2020, the SRTA Heritage Committee published "SNAPSHOTS - Memories of the Surrey School District". Our second project is the result of our recognition of the rapid growth in the district in the 1950s which resulted in the construction of new schools, additions to many others, and the introduction of the junior high school system.

Information was difficult to find. We double-checked conflicting details, read government documents, triple-checked facts, searched old newspapers and archival information, studied School Board minutes, waded through the school websites, pored over photos of the schools, staffs, and classes, and located people to interview. We hope this document brings back as many memories for you as it did for us.

We wish to thank the staff of the Surrey Archives, particularly assistant archivist Joanne (Jo) Seungun Lee, who gave so generously of her time and expertise. We appreciate the support and resources provided by Hugh Ellenwood, Archives Manager of the White Rock Museum, as well as the connections, stories, and photos shared by individuals from the SRTA and the community.

We would particularly like to recognize the work of Surrey teachers Jack Brown and Trudy Rutherford whose research and organization provided inspiration and valuable sources of information for us. Special thanks to Laurae McNally of the Surrey School Board who has been a tireless advocate of our projects and to the SRTA for their continued support.

We proudly present the document "SNAPSHOTS 2 - Developments in the Surrey School District in the 1950s". Enjoy!

SRTA Heritage Committee:

Alice Tiles (Chairperson)

Karen Bentzen

Karen Susheski

2025

Surrey Then and Now

The population of Surrey has grown rapidly from 35 residents in 1879 to almost 700,000 today; from one school in 1882 with 12 students to more than 126 schools with 81,000 students. The factors for this growth are varied and began with the first regular crossing of the Fraser River in 1882 by the K de K steam ferry that transported residents and livestock from Brownsville to New Westminster. During the late 1890s, the need for a bridge became apparent. The first bridge, the New Westminster Bridge, was started in 1902 and was completed in 1904. The two-decker bridge handled vehicular traffic on the upper deck with the lower deck functioning as a railway bridge.

The Inter-Urban tram was a lifeline for communities south of the Fraser River and fostered agricultural, residential, and industrial growth for the South Fraser area. The BC Electric Inter-Urban Railway (BCER) provided a connection between Vancouver and Chilliwack and ran four times each day from 1912 to 1950. The line still exists and carries local freight a few times a day. With the improvement in roads and with cars becoming more popular, the BCER terminated service in 1950.

By 1936 growing traffic, stemming partly by the many settlers who arrived during the Depression and the prairie drought, prompted the construction of a second bridge. The \$4 million bridge was named the Pattullo Bridge after Premier “Duff” Pattullo. The bridge was originally tolled at 25¢ per crossing, with the toll being removed in 1952. The old New Westminster Bridge was converted to rail use only. The Pattullo Bridge and the opening of the King George Highway in 1940 led to the rapid development of new urban centres in Surrey.

After World War II and the ensuing post-war baby boom, many people relocated to Surrey because of war-time housing shortages in Vancouver and New Westminster. This resulted in many families of service men looking for affordable housing in Surrey with many renting seasonal homes in White Rock and Crescent Beach. Between 1941 and 1951 the population in Surrey increased by 126.9%. Surrey officially became a city in 1993 and School District #36 was incorporated April 1946 and included the Municipality of Surrey, The City of White Rock and Barnston Island.

Sources: Jack Brown's Website, Statistics Canada, Statistics B.C., Black Press Media and Staff, Surrey Now - Leader



A BC Electric Railway train leaving Chilliwack for Vancouver, (BC Archives, item E 00487)

Scenes Around Surrey in the 1950s



Commercial buildings on King George Highway. [ca 1950].
Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 180.7.22



Looking north along King George Highway at 126th Street (now the Bridgeview area). The Pattullo Bridge can be seen in the distance. [195?]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 180.7.34I



Whalley shopping mall with High Low Foods and Government Liquor Store in view (King George Highway and 104th Avenue). [195?]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 180.7.34C



Street scene of Whalley business area near Whalley's Corner (near King George Highway and 108th Avenue). [195?]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 180.7.28



Commercial buildings with the Round Up Cafe in the foreground (on King George Highway near 104th Avenue). [195?]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 180.7.34A



Ice-skating in Surrey at Fry's Corner (now the northeast corner of Pacific Highway #15 and Fraser Highway). Courtesy of Surrey Archives 41.01



View of Pacific Highway (now 176th Street) and businesses in Cloverdale, Mar.1953. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC 389.



North Surrey Fire Hall and volunteer firefighters standing with the Port Kells fire truck. September 1956. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SM 1496



Dell Shopping Mall with Super-Valu, Reitman's and hardware store in view (King George Highway near 108th Avenue). [195?]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 180.7.34F



Surrey Municipal Hall (2nd), opening of addition. May 1953. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. 91.2.3413

The Surrey School District: 1950 to 1959

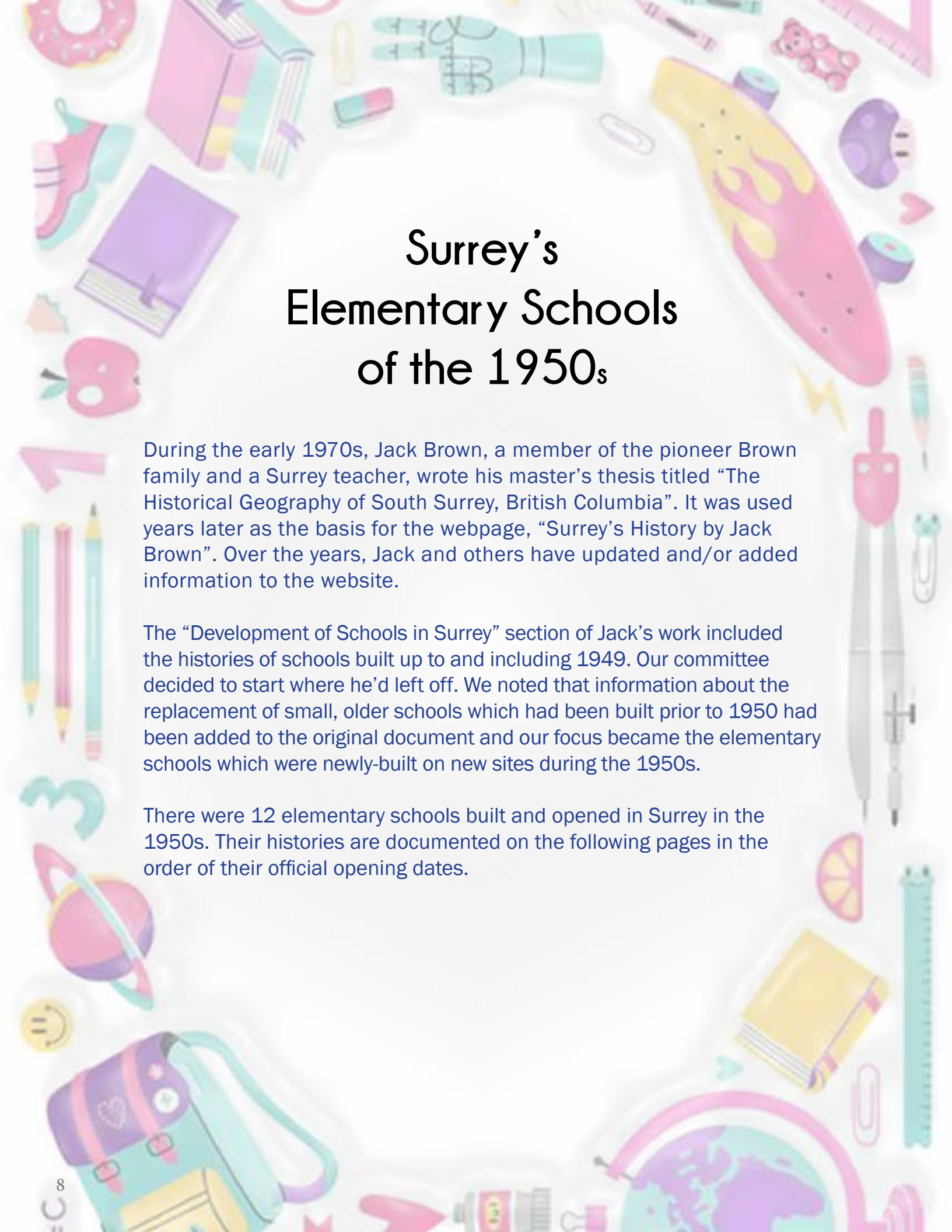
*A*s more and more young families moved to Surrey in the 1950s, it was a huge challenge for the school district to keep pace with the increasing number of school-aged children.

When the 1950/51 school year began, there were 38 schools, 5,945 students and 189 teachers in the Surrey School District. Four junior-senior high schools enrolled 2,104 students in grades seven to twelve (and grade thirteen where it was offered) and 3,841 students attended grades one to six in the district's 34 elementary schools.

Ten years later, there were 54 schools, 15,554 students and 525 teachers. Five senior high schools enrolled 2,974 students in grades ten to thirteen, six junior high schools registered 2,746 students in grades seven and eight and 9,834 students attended grades one to six in its 43 elementary schools.

There was tremendous growth and change in all aspects of the education system in Surrey during the 1950s. The number of students had increased by 9,600, there were 16 new schools, and additions had been built on many others. The cost of running the school district had more than tripled from \$1,239,502 in the 1949/50 school year to \$3,908,463 in 1959/60. A few of the other events and developments of note in the district at the time were:

- Referendums were held in some years to approve tax increases and/or the borrowing of funds needed by the district for the construction of new schools, additions to existing buildings and for furnishings and equipment. Roughly half of a district's approved budget was covered by "Government Grants" and the rest by "District Expenditure".
- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff was a concern. Shortages continued in subject areas such as Physical Education, Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Science, Senior English and Commerce.
- Future Teachers' Clubs were formed in high schools to encourage interest in teaching as a career.
- Committees of teachers worked with the assistance of the Ministry of Education and the B.C. Teachers' Federation to develop and improve the curriculum.
- Supervisors of elementary schools and secondary education were appointed. Other new positions created were Directors and or Helping Teachers for intermediate grades (John Niedzielski), primary grades (Erma Stephenson in 1952/53), elementary school music (Pete Kinvig in September 1955), special remedial education (Elizabeth White in September 1955) and night schools (Leslie Martin in September 1955).
- A textbook rental system was in use for students in the older grades.
- Children who lived over three miles from their schools were transported free. In 1959, ten buses were needed for this. Nine were owned by the district and one was chartered.
- A district maintenance department employed a superintendent of maintenance who supervised a staff which included janitors, carpenters, an electrician, a plumber, truck drivers, a storekeeper and general maintenance men.
- Expenditures for school-site and playground development increased.
- The use of portable classrooms was noted as early as 1956.
- A new school board office was built in the Surrey Centre area.



Surrey's Elementary Schools of the 1950s

During the early 1970s, Jack Brown, a member of the pioneer Brown family and a Surrey teacher, wrote his master's thesis titled "The Historical Geography of South Surrey, British Columbia". It was used years later as the basis for the webpage, "Surrey's History by Jack Brown". Over the years, Jack and others have updated and/or added information to the website.

The "Development of Schools in Surrey" section of Jack's work included the histories of schools built up to and including 1949. Our committee decided to start where he'd left off. We noted that information about the replacement of small, older schools which had been built prior to 1950 had been added to the original document and our focus became the elementary schools which were newly-built on new sites during the 1950s.

There were 12 elementary schools built and opened in Surrey in the 1950s. Their histories are documented on the following pages in the order of their official opening dates.

Prince Charles Elementary, 1955

12405 100th Avenue



Prince Charles Elementary, 1960s. Courtesy of Surrey Archives SMA81.042.35

As was a common practice in the early days, schools were often named after royalty or persons of distinction. This school was named after England's Queen Elizabeth II's eldest son, Prince Charles, who upon his mother's death ascended to the throne on September 8th, 2022 and became known as King Charles III.

Located in a burgeoning area for population growth, Prince Charles Elementary was in operation from September, but was officially opened on November 2nd, 1955. Although

that night there was a "Storm of the Decade" the opening was well attended by parents, students and other members of the community who were eager to welcome the new school and staff. Mrs. J.A. Case, executive member of the Parent Teacher Association Council, had the honour of opening the school. The principal, Mr. F. Byron, and staff prepared a short student presentation which was much appreciated by the audience. School District Inspector, K.B. Woodward who was in attendance, stated that this was to be the first of more schools to be built in this rapidly growing area.

In 1954 a five-acre plot costing \$1000 per acre had been purchased by the school board near the intersection of the then named Liverpool and Westminster Roads in the West Townline area. The purpose was to build a much-needed new school which was to be named Prince Charles Elementary.

The new school consisted of six classrooms accommodating about 400 grades one to eight students. Unfortunately, even when completed, it was insufficient to accommodate the expanding student population because a new subdivision, St. Helen's Park, was completed faster than anticipated adding four hundred plus new homes to the community.

Upon its opening, half the classes at Prince Charles were on shift until the covered playground area on the ground floor was redeveloped into three additional classrooms. The next few years saw the student population continue to grow with some learners being transported to Johnston Heights Elementary until eight more classrooms and an activity hall were added. The expansion included a five-classroom unit plus three classrooms added to the basement of the existing building. At its peak, it was reported that Prince Charles School's population exceeded 700. Eventually new schools were built in the area providing some relief to this overcrowding.



Some early classes at Prince Charles Elementary. Courtesy of Kam Sangha, Sept. 12, 2021 Surrey BC and Surrounding Cities Classmates Connection with Class Pictures (FaceBook/Meta)

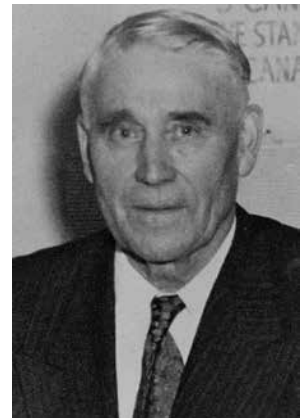
J.T. Brown Elementary, 1956
12530 60th Avenue



J.T. Brown Elementary School, ca. 1960's. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.38

J.T. Brown Elementary was built at 12530 60th Avenue (known then as Salten Road at Westerman Road). It had four classrooms when school started in September of 1956 and there were 168 students in grades one to eight. Two of the classes were on shift and plans were already underway for a two-room addition to the school.

Joseph Thompson Brown officially opened the new school, which was named in his honour, on October 12th, 1956. School Board chairman, Len Shepherd, acted as Master of Ceremonies and Reeve Robert Nesbitt and Councillor James Johnston extended congratulations from Surrey Council. In his speech to the guests, J.T. Brown stressed the importance of schools in “this age of science and industry”. He also spoke to the importance of the parents’ good will and co-operation in working with the teachers. Nearly 200 residents and visitors attended the event which was held in the school’s activity room.



Reeve J.T. Brown (1883-1960).
Courtesy of Surrey Archives,
91.5.36

Joseph T. Brown was the fourth of eight children born into the pioneer family of Christopher and Sarah Brown. He operated a farm on the original Brown property in the Colebrook area and his home, built in about 1909, is now a designated Heritage site. J.T. Brown was very involved in the community - in the Colebrook area, as well as in Surrey municipality as a whole. He was a School Trustee and also served as a Surrey Municipal Councillor from 1912 to 1916, 1918 to 1921, and again from 1927 to 1929. He was Reeve of Surrey for a total of twelve years - the longest Reeve-ship in Surrey’s history.

Dr. F.D. Sinclair Elementary, 1956

7480 128th Street



Dr. F.D. Sinclair Elementary School circa 1960
Courtesy of Surrey Archives. NC2565

Dr. F.D. Sinclair was the first medical doctor in Surrey and was instrumental in the founding of Surrey Memorial Hospital. Dr. F.D. Sinclair Elementary is one of seven B.C. schools named for a medical doctor. Dr. Sinclair was born in St. Stephen, New Brunswick in 1883 and earned a medical degree from McGill University in 1910. While studying at McGill he became best friends with fellow student, William Shannon, son of early Surrey settlers William and Eliza Shannon. William enticed Dr. Sinclair, known as “Doc”, to move to Surrey with stories of Surrey’s potential and growth and its dire need of a doctor. Dr. Sinclair settled in Cloverdale in 1911 and was soon appointed the medical health officer and coroner for the municipality.

There was a serious outbreak of diphtheria in the White Rock area in 1912. As many of the tourists who visited the beaches arrived by train, there was a risk that the deadly disease would be easily spread to other communities. Dr. Sinclair suspected the outbreak originated from garbage and animal waste dumped into the water by commercial fish canneries. He sought the support of city council to ban the practice. So began a lifelong crusade to improve sanitation practices in order to protect the health of the community.



Dr. F.D. Sinclair.
Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC1636

In 1913 he returned to his hometown to marry Isabell Randall, a Boston born nurse. They returned to Surrey, along with his mother, who was known as Mother Sinclair. They built a home on New McLellan Road (#10 Highway) east of the present Surrey Museum and Archives where they lived with their three children. It also had a waiting room, doctor’s office, and a few beds for the seriously ill. The house was eventually moved to 17725 58A Avenue in Cloverdale.

After enlisting in the Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1916 Dr. Sinclair served in France during World War I where he contracted typhoid fever, paratyphoid, influenza, and measles. It’s amazing he survived but these illnesses were his impetus to improve cleanliness procedures within the medical profession.

He returned to Surrey in 1919 and became a familiar figure to the school children as he visited every school to give each child a yearly health examination and later to administer vaccinations. In 1946 there was an outbreak of smallpox and Dr. Sinclair began mandatory vaccinations. He petitioned the council and government to provide grants to the Victorian Order of Nurses and later the St. John Ambulance Brigade so they could assist him.

He attended to patients day or night, in his office or via home visits, traveling by horse and buggy. A compassionate man, Doc Sinclair did not charge his impoverished patients, believing if someone could pay they would. He once rowed to minister to a patient through the flooded Number 10 Highway and would drive patients to the New Westminster hospital if they had no means of transportation. With Mrs. Sinclair as his nurse, he worked tirelessly under stress and with poor facilities. Surrey’s first member of the Victorian Order of Nurses, Phyllis Bond Payton, said ‘Dr. Sinclair was helpful and appreciative; he was one of the best diagnosticians’.

In 1947 he initiated fundraising for a hospital and in 1948 he turned the first sod. He died January 28, 1951 before the hospital was completed. All Cloverdale businesses closed in his honour on the day of his funeral. Reverend McLean stated, “It will be a long time until we understand just how great a man we had among us”.

Mrs. Ronnie Begg, daughter of Dr. Sinclair, officially opened Dr. F.D. Sinclair Elementary October 19, 1956. At that time the school enrolled 251 pupils in grades one to eight.

K.B. Woodward Elementary, 1956
(École Elementaire K.B. Woodward)
13130 106th Avenue



K.B. Woodward at the school opening, 1956.
Courtesy of Surrey Archives,
017.0022.160.06-332.2

By the 1940s Surrey was a rapidly-growing area and to meet the demand for more educational oversight, in 1943 K.B. Woodward was appointed by the school board as the first Inspector of Schools for the Surrey School District. He was the lone administrator for the huge district and his many duties included conducting inspections, hiring teachers, appointing principals, assisting teachers with instruction and ensuring that school equipment and facilities were in good working order. Woodward was a well-respected educator, administrator and community leader who left his imprint by having this school named in his honour.

On October 26, 1956 K.B. Woodward Elementary School was officially opened with over 400 people in attendance including school trustees, politicians, representatives of the Surrey Teachers' Association and members of the public. A number of speakers praised Woodward's work in guiding the affairs of the large school district which included 10,500 students and over 340 teachers. Vern Ardiel, president of the STA, presented the inspector with a silver clock, a gift from Surrey's teaching staffs.

Inspector Woodward thanked the speakers and expressed appreciation for having a school named in his honour. He stated that the school was a key piece in the construction program in North Surrey and would relieve overcrowding in several neighbouring schools including Prince Charles, Grosvenor Road, and David Brankin. He ended his speech with a call for support of an upcoming referendum to fund further school construction in the district.

The site for K.B. Woodward School was on land originally belonging to the Royal Kwantlen #2 Reserve of the McMillan Island Band. The 40-acre parcel was once a native hunting camp bordering a small lake but with time the land was abandoned. After lengthy negotiations the parcel was purchased by Surrey municipality for \$40,000. The land was designated for two schools, a firehall and a park. A ten acre strip on the east side of



Above: K.B. Woodward Elementary, 1960s. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.40.

Below: Younger students at K.B. Woodward Elementary, 1958
Courtesy of Kam Sanghan Surrey BC and Surrounding Cities
Classmate Connections and Class Pictures (Facebook/Meta).



the parcel was allocated for the construction of K.B. Woodward Elementary and, neighbouring to the south, West Whalley Junior High School.

The original K.B. Woodward structure consisted of ten classrooms and soon accommodated over 500 grades one to six students. Within three years the increased student population necessitated the addition of four more classrooms. In subsequent years a gravel field, new office area, gym and more classrooms were added. Immediately to the west of the school, Royal Kwantlen Park was constructed offering students grass fields for sports.

In the late 1970s K.B. Woodward became a dual-track school with the addition of late Core French Immersion classes. In 1979 the Programme cadre de français (for children of francophone families) was initiated at the nearby K.B. Woodward Annex, Discovery School (131st Street and 109th Avenue). After two years the cadre program was moved to K.B. Woodward Elementary. The rationale for the move was that teachers of the immersion and cadre programs could share resources, events and activities. Starting with a handful of students, by the 1980s the French program expanded drawing students from all over the district.

Johnston Heights Elementary, 1957 - 1998

9826 152nd Street

Johnston Heights Elementary was built near the intersection of Forrest and Johnston Roads (now 98th Avenue and 152nd Street). It was named after the Johnstons - one of Surrey's earliest pioneer families.

In the late 1860s, James Johnston, originally from Ireland and newly-arrived in the area from Ontario, acquired six quarter-sections of land - one for himself and one for each of his five sons. The homestead extended - in present-day terms - from Highway #10, north to 80th Avenue, east to about 160th Avenue, and west to 148th Street. It became known locally as the "Johnston Settlement". James Johnston was a Warden or Commissioner appointed by the government of the day before Surrey was incorporated as a municipality.



Johnston Heights School, 1965.
Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC2547

The Johnston family was very active in the community. They participated in the construction of the first church in Surrey, Christ Church Anglican at Surrey Centre, and in the development of schools in the area. Johnston Road School, built by the local fathers with lumber supplied by the government, was located on the west side of Johnston Road north of Burquhart Road (now 152nd and 68th Avenue).

The main north-south road through the community became known as Johnston Road (now 152nd Street) and, in the mid-1900s a new neighbourhood several kilometres to the north was named "Johnston Heights". Three schools - Johnston Heights Elementary, Johnston Heights Junior High and Johnston Heights Secondary would eventually be built in this new area.

The first of those schools, Johnston Heights Elementary, was officially opened on November 8th, 1957 by Councillor Roy Readman. Inspector K.B. Woodward introduced William Beagle, the Chairman of the Surrey School Board who gave the official welcome, and introduced School Board members L. Shepherd, J. Dingwall and Ken Patterson. Other invited guests included William Hodgson, Mayor of White Rock; Reeve Robert Nesbitt; C. Moore (representing the Surrey Teachers Association); and, Mrs. A. Haines (President of the Surrey Parent-Teacher Council). It was noted by one of the speakers that expansion had been kept in mind in the design of the building, and that it could be enlarged to as many as sixteen classrooms.

In the 1957/58 school year, 163 students in grades one to eight attended Johnston Heights Elementary. Enrolment at the beginning of the next school year dropped to 151 students in grades one to six when students in grades seven and eight were moved into the newlyopened Johnston Heights Junior High School.

At the start of the 1977/78 school year, Johnston Heights Elementary School was renamed William F. Davidson Elementary to commemorate the retirement of the Surrey School District's Director of Instruction. In September of 1998, a new William F. Davidson Elementary was opened at 15550 99A Avenue. Mountainview Montessori School, a Choice Program in the Surrey School District, moved into the empty Johnston Heights Elementary building in 2004. The original school building was eventually demolished and replaced with a new facility.

T.E. Scott Elementary, 1957
7090 148th Street

T.E. Scott Elementary opened November 15, 1957 and was named after Mr. T.E. Scott, a trustee on the Surrey School Board. It was reported that the school enrolled 185 students from grades one to six when it opened.



T.E. Scott Elementary School [196~] Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.45

In 1963 plans were in place to add two more classrooms and in 1965 these two classrooms, along with an activity room and a covered play area, were built. In 2012 eight new classrooms were added to house grades one to seven and to accommodate all day kindergarten that was instituted provincially in 2011.

William Watson Elementary, 1958
16450 80th Avenue

The school was named for Surrey School Trustee William Watson. He was the first to propose building a new school in order to alleviate the overcrowding in the surrounding area now known as Fleetwood. This close-knit farming community quickly evolved into an urban area.

The school was officially opened February 27, 1958. A capacity crowd attended the opening where Reeve Robert Nesbitt congratulated the school board and chairman on the area's newest school. The six room plus activity room school cost \$101,000 and was built by contractor Patrick Coyne of Port Coquitlam. It enrolled 76 students in grades one to six. Reeve Nesbitt turned the key over to board chairperson, William Beagle, and Principal S. Baerg. The Fleetwood PTA catered the opening.



Left: William Watson Elementary [196-]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMAB1.042.41.
Right: William Watson. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SM2570



A.H.P. Matthew Elementary, 1958

13367 97th Avenue



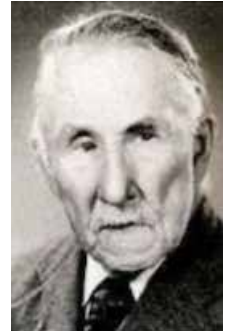
Left: A.H.P. Matthew Elementary School, 1965. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC2570
Right: A.H.P. Matthew Elementary School. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, WH.161



A.H.P. Matthew Elementary was built at 13367 97th Avenue on the north-west corner of the intersection of Unwin and Hannah Roads (now 134th Street and 97th Avenue). It was named after Alfred Henry Poltaire Matthew who was one of the earliest teachers in Surrey.

Classes at A.H.P. Matthew Elementary started on April 14th, 1958 and the school was officially opened by Surrey Reeve, Robert M. Nesbitt on May 23rd, 1958. Surrey School Board Secretary, Don Christian, served as master of ceremonies. The highlight of the event was when Alfred Matthew's son, Stanley Edwin Matthew, spoke about his father's extraordinary life.

Alfred Henry Poltaire Matthew (1864-1958) was a child when his family emigrated from Porthleven (Cornwall), England to Brighton, Ontario. He obtained his teaching certificate in 1884, but worked as a carpenter for a few years in Cobourg, Ontario before he and his young family traveled west, eventually settling in the Port Kells area. They had come to Surrey where Alfred hoped to find a teaching position. At the time, there was no Normal School in BC, so he took a job training new teachers and later became one of the first high school teachers in Surrey.



A.H.P. Matthew (1864-1958).
Photo courtesy of SRTA
"Chatter" Newsletter,
4 April 2016.

A.H.P. Matthew Elementary was built to relieve overcrowding at nearby schools, in particular, Simon Cunningham and David Brankin where classes had been on shift. The new school had 12 classrooms, a library and a combined administration/staff area. There were large play areas on the ground floor - one for girls and one for boys.

In its first year, A.H.P. Matthew enrolled 255 students in grades one to six. Just 4 years later - by the end of the 1961/62 school year - enrolment had increased to 650. This was due in part to the reassignment of grade seven students to the district's elementary schools. The school's population increased rapidly and changes to the building reflected that growth. The indoor play areas on the ground floor were converted to classroom spaces. Due to overcrowding, in the 1962/63 school year, the grade six and seven students were moved to Simon Cunningham Elementary during the construction of additional classrooms. Over the years, a gymnasium, covered play area, new front entrance and administration area and several more classrooms were built onto the school.

Below: The A.H.P. Matthew Staff (First year: 1957 - 1958). Courtesy of the Trudy Rutherford Collection.

Right: Grade 1 and 2 class (First year: 1957 - 1958). Photo Courtesy of Karen Bentzen



Mary Jane Norris Elementary, 1958 - 1984

11616 99th Avenue



Left: Mary Jane Norris School, ca. 1960's. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.33
Right: Staff (1970 - 1971) courtesy of teacher Cheryl Kallberg
Bottom: Grade 2 class (1970 - 1971). Photo courtesy of teacher Cheryl Kallberg



Mary Jane Norris Elementary was located at 11616 99th Avenue in the Royal Heights area of Surrey - an area that is often thought to be part of Delta. Bordered by 96th Avenue (Townline Road) to the south, 120th Street (Scott Road) to the east and River Road to the west and north, Royal Heights is located above the Fraser River industrial area and was one of the first areas in Surrey to be settled. Transportation to the area vastly improved in 1910 with the opening of the B.C. Electric Interurban Line which ran from Vancouver to Chilliwack. Children who lived in the area at that time had to walk long distances to school and, as more families settled in the area and the number of school-aged children grew, parents began advocating for a school to be built.

Mary Jane Norris Elementary was officially opened on November 21st, 1958 by School Trustee, Len Shepherd. Other School Trustees in attendance were Mrs. Lena Shaw, William Beagle, William Watson, Kenneth Paterson and J. Burrows. Mr. and Mrs. A. Haines, members of Surrey Parent-Teacher Council, also attended as did Reeve Robert Nesbitt and George M. Thrift who had attended the first school in Surrey (Clover Valley).

The new Mary Jane Norris Elementary was a four-room, prefabricated school. The cost of the school was just under \$30,000. Two additional classrooms were built onto the school during the 1961/62 school year. In addition to the classrooms, the school had a classroomsized library, an office area, a small gymnasium and a covered play area.

In its first year of operation (1958/59), there were 158 students in grades one to six enrolled at Mary Jane Norris. The school's population grew quickly and for the next several years, it could accommodate only grades one to three (with some grade four students in some years). Once again, the older children had to walk long distances to school - were often on shift - and parents became vocal about the need for another school in the area.

Royal Heights Elementary opened nearby at 11665 97th Avenue in September of 1966. For the next 25 years, Royal Heights Elementary was the area's "intermediate-grades" school and Mary Jane Norris Elementary its "primary-grades" school. In June of 1984, Mary Jane Norris Elementary was closed due to severe budget cuts mandated by the provincial government and its students were moved to Royal Heights Elementary. Today, there is no sign of Mary Jane Norris Elementary... there are rows of houses where the school once stood.

An interesting fact about Mary Jane Norris School came to light a few years after it opened. The intention had been that this new school would be named after the first teacher in the Surrey School District. However, an error had been made. The name of the first teacher in Surrey was not Mary Jane Norris but was, in fact, Martha Jane Norris! On December 19th, 1989, a new school named Martha Jane Norris Elementary was officially opened a few kilometres to the southeast.



Mary Jane Shannon Elementary, 1959

10682 144th Street



Mary Jane Shannon Elementary, 1960s. Courtesy of Surrey Archives SMA 81.042.42



Mary Jane Shannon (1927?).
Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 170S10A

Mary Jane Shannon (1876 - 1964) was among the first students to attend Surrey's inaugural school in Clover Valley (Cloverdale) in 1882. Her enthusiasm for teaching led her to graduate in 1901 from Vancouver's first Normal School class. Following her graduation, she taught within the province's interior for a few years before returning to Surrey where she dedicated herself to teaching grades one through eight at the very same school she once attended.

Driven by her enduring love for learning, Mary sought to expand her horizons and subsequently trained as a nurse and instructor. Her enduring passion for the written word was evident as she delved into writing, eventually pursuing advanced studies at Columbia University in New York. Mary's literary contributions earned her recognition as a respected author of articles in both Canadian and American magazines. She was also a regular contributor to "The Surrey Leader" newspaper sharing stories of the early days in the community. Mary, who called Surrey her home, left an indelible mark on the community, commemorated through the naming of two schools in her honour.

To the skirl of bagpipes and in the presence of a packed audience, Mary Jane Shannon Elementary and the nearby Mary Jane Shannon Junior High School were officially inaugurated on May 22, 1959 by Deputy Minister of Education, J.F.K. English. During the opening ceremony, Deputy Minister English expressed his desire for the schools to serve all members of community when not in use by students. He also spoke of the introduction of the Junior High School system, a relatively new educational innovation at the time, aimed to enhance the educational journey for students by facilitating a smoother transition from elementary to high school.

A significant moment of the event came when the guest of honour, Mary Jane Shannon, shared her reminiscences of the early school days in Surrey. She spoke passionately of the need for education to evolve and adapt to the changing times in order to better meet the needs of students. Mary Jane Shannon's wise words served as a touching reminder of the importance of staying attuned to the evolving educational landscape.

Mary Jane Shannon Elementary was constructed at the site of the then Archibald Road and 106A Avenue. It opened to about 260 grades one to six students and provided relief to nearby Hjorth Road Elementary which was on double shift.

The new school which consisted of ten classrooms and a large activity room with a stage, cost approximately \$190,000 and took just over a year to build. It was structured in two sections with six classrooms on the ground floor and connected to four classrooms over a large covered play area. The first adventure playground, a wooden structure, was constructed by the parents of the community. The playing fields were shared with nearby Mary Jane Shannon Junior High.

Over time Mary Jane Shannon Elementary evolved with the addition of kindergarten and an "open area" instructional space which was later converted into regular classrooms, office and storage facilities. The student population, which was drawn largely from the surrounding apartments, grew steadily and was accommodated in the school as it too and its programs expanded.



Mary Jane Shannon Elementary staff, 1967. Courtesy of Kam Sangha, Oct. 1, 2021. Surrey B.C. and Surrounding Cities Classmates Connection with Class Pictures (Facebook/Meta)



A grade one class at Mary Jane Shannon Elementary, 1962. Courtesy of Kam Sangha, Surrey BC and Surrounding Cities Classmates Connection with Class Pictures (FaceBook/Meta)

Lena Shaw Elementary, 1959 **14250 100A Avenue**

Lena Shaw (1891 - 1971), later known as Lena (Shaw) Hutton, was a highly regarded Surrey School Trustee, serving with distinction for more than ten years during the 1950s and 1960s. Residing in Port Port Kells, she was deeply involved in her community, dedicating herself to various local causes with a particular emphasis on enhancing the quality and accessibility of education within Surrey.



Lena Shaw Elementary, 1960. Courtesy of Surrey Archives SMA81.042.44

Lena Shaw Elementary officially opened its doors on October 16, 1959, marking a significant day in the community's history.

The inauguration was celebrated in the school's auditorium, which was filled to capacity with eager parents, students, and members of the community, all gathered to witness this important occasion.



Lena (Shaw) Hutton, 1962.
Courtesy of Surrey Archives
NC3052

Among the attendees were several dignitaries, including the mayors of Surrey and White Rock, as well as representatives from the school board and the Surrey Teachers' Association. MLA Dr. Gordon Gibson and school board chairperson, William Beagle, were featured speakers. The highlight of the ceremony, however, was when Lena Shaw herself addressed the gathering. She expressed her joy and gratitude for the honour of having the school named after her. Following Lena Shaw's heartfelt speech, the new principal, Mr. Friesen, took the stage and introduced the teaching staff. The ceremony concluded with an invitation for all present to tour the new building.

The location chosen for Lena Shaw school was near Gaudette and Westminster Roads, present day 142nd Street and 100A Avenue. When the school opened it welcomed about 180 grades one to six students. As the community and school population grew, expansion of the school and its site was necessary. By the early 1960s two more classrooms were added and four more by the 1970s. The school site was expanded with the purchase of four acres of adjacent property. Over the years, the school and student population continued to grow and Lena Shaw became one of the largest elementary schools in the district.



An early staff of Lena Shaw Elementary. Courtesy of Kam Sangha, Oct.31,2021. Surrey BC and Surrounding Cities Classmates Connection with Class Pictures (FaceBook/Meta)

H.T. Thrift Elementary, 1959 1739 148th Street

H.T. Thrift Elementary was built on the west side of Oxford Road (now 148th Street) just north of North Bluff Road (now 16th Avenue). It was named after Henry T. Thrift, one of Surrey's earliest pioneers.

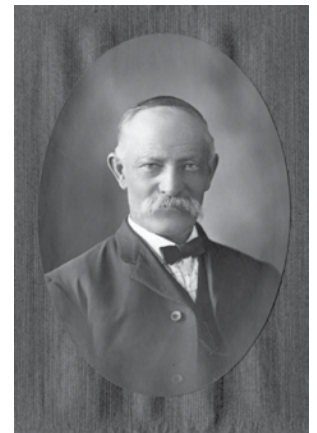
The original building had six classrooms, an activity room and an administration area. It was built at a cost of \$115,000. In its first year of operation (1959/60) the school enrolled 122 students in grades one to six.



H.T. Thrift Elementary was officially opened on October 30th, 1959 by White Rock School Trustee, Jack Burrows. Surrey School Board chairman William Beagle, Trustee Len Shepherd, Reeve R. Nesbitt and White Rock Mayor William Hodgson also attended the ceremony. Several members of the Thrift family were special guests and Edmund W. Thrift, son of the late pioneer, represented the family as a platform guest.

Above: H.T. Thrift School, ca. 1960's. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.43
Below: H.T. Thrift [190-]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 2021.0002.90

Henry T. Thrift was instrumental in the beginnings of many of Surrey's rural schools. The Thrift family settled in the Clover Valley area (now Cloverdale) in 1882 and Henry soon began discussions with his neighbours about the need for a school for their children. After receiving instructions from the government on how to proceed, Thrift and a few of his neighbours conducted the first school board meeting on a cedar log at the corner of the Pacific Highway and Old McLellan Road (now 176th Street and Highway #10). The formal request for a teacher that they sent to the government was soon approved and Miss Martha Jane Norris of Langley Prairie was hired. Surrey School, a split-cedar shack furnished with cedar benches and desks, opened in September of 1892. It was located near the south-west corner of 176th Street and 60th Avenue. There were 13 students - all children of the Shannon, Thrift, Boothroyd and Huck families. The school was used until the fall of 1893 when the first school in Surrey built by the government, Clover Valley School, opened near 60th Avenue and 180th Street. In 1884, the Thrift family relocated to Hall's Prairie. Thrift named the area Hazelmere and donated land for Hazelmere United Church. After the Thrift family moved to White Rock in 1910, Henry became an advocate for education there, too. He donated some of his land on Buena Vista Avenue for White Rock's first school and helped to build the school.



H.T. Thrift had a major hand in other developments in Surrey's early days. He served as Surrey's Municipal Clerk in 1883 and again from 1886 to 1890. He established a post office in his house and carried the mail between Hall's Prairie, Clover Valley and Langley for nine years. He was active in the Settlers' Association, Orange Lodge, Surrey Agriculture Association, Cloverdale Odd Fellows, Boy Scouts and many other community groups.

Considering his many contributions to the Surrey communities in which he lived, it was fitting that, when plans for a new school were being discussed, the Thrift family's request that it be called the Henry T. Thrift School was honoured.

SURREY'S JUNIOR HIGH/JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

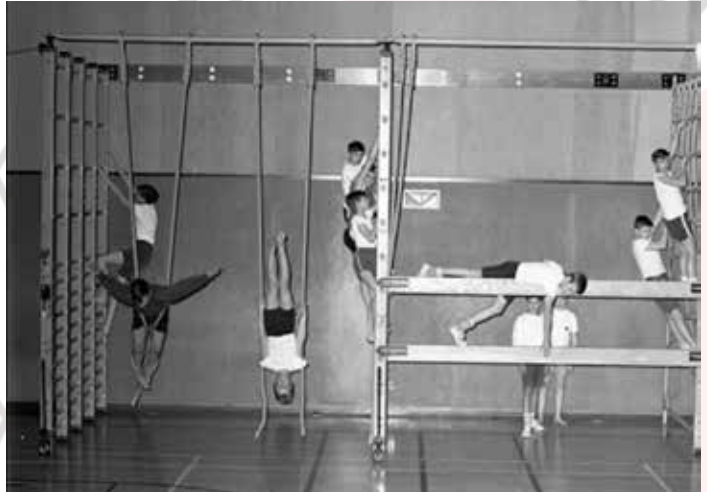
In 1956, the provincial government approved the separation of junior and senior high schools. The introduction of the junior high school system would facilitate a smoother transition for students from elementary to high school. In Surrey, another benefit was that junior high schools built throughout the district alleviated over-crowding in the existing schools - both elementary (grades one to six) and junior-senior (grades seven to twelve).

From 1957 to 1974, Surrey opened eleven junior high/secondary schools. Their timeline is as follows:

- Five junior high schools, enrolling grades seven and eight, opened in the late 1950s.
- By the beginning of the 1962 to 63 school year, all grade seven students were registered in elementary schools.
- In 1962, the term “high” was replaced by “secondary”.
- Four junior secondary schools opened between 1962 and 1969 - all with grades eight and nine in attendance.
- When the 1964 to 65 school year began, all junior secondary schools enrolled grades eight to ten.
- The two junior secondaries built in the 1970s, opened with grades eight to ten. Over next two years, grades eleven and twelve were added and they became “secondary” schools.

In the 1990s, Surrey School Board policy resulted in the restructuring of schools so that all secondary schools would enrol grades eight through twelve. This change happened gradually and was completed by September of 2002. Some of the existing junior secondary school buildings were reconstructed and/or enlarged and became secondary schools. The rest were repurposed or demolished.

The histories of Surrey's junior high/secondary schools are documented on the following pages in the order of their official opening dates.



Gym class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.15173



Woodworking class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.15054



Band class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.17849

West Whalley Junior High, 1958 - 2002

13105 104th Street

-Classes started: April 14, 1958

-Officially opened: June 1958, by W.G. Graham, Education Department Administration Director

-Name changed to *West Whalley Junior Secondary: 1962*

West Whalley Junior High was named for the Whalley neighbourhood in which it was built. The area had been named for Arthur Whalley who was among its early settlers. His family had built and operated a gas station, corner store and cabins for tourists on a piece of land which became known as “Whalley’s Corner”. (Today, King George Boulevard, Grosvenor Road and 108th Avenue intersect at this corner.) West Whalley Junior High/Junior Secondary served its community well for 45 years. In September of 1959, it had one of the first high school bands in Surrey and, in its later years, it was the first school to pilot the Punjabi language program. In 2000, the school was the target of three separate arson attempts and was rebuilt.

The 2001/02 school year was West Whalley Junior Secondary’s last in operation. It closed its doors in June of 2002 and the building was demolished during that summer. In September, its students merged with those of Len Shepherd Junior Secondary at the new Kwantlen Park Secondary at 10441 132nd Street which had been built adjacent to the old West Whalley School.



West Whalley Junior High, ca. 1960s. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.52

Johnston Heights Junior High, 1959 - 1992

15355 98th Avenue

-Classes started: January 2, 1959

-Officially opened: April 17, 1959, by Leslie Peterson, B.C. Education Minister

-Name changed to *Johnston Heights Junior Secondary: 1962*



Johnston Heights Junior High School, ca. 1960s. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.53

The classroom block of Johnston Heights Junior High opened on January 2, 1959. The school was in operation for over 33 years and closed at the end of June in 1992. That September, students moved into the new Johnston Heights Secondary at 15350 99th Avenue which had been built on the original school’s parking lot. The vacated junior secondary building was demolished.

Both schools, the area in which they were built, and Johnston Road (now 152nd street) which was nearby, were all named after Irish immigrant and Surrey pioneer, James Johnston.



Track meet. Courtesy of Surrey Archives SA1992.036.34215

Mary Jane Shannon Junior High, 1958/59 - 1984

14577 106A Avenue

- First year on the annual report to the Ministry: 1958/59
- Officially opened: May 22, 1959, by Dr. J.F.K. English, Deputy Minister of Education
- Name changed to *Mary Jane Shannon Junior Secondary: 1962*
- Name changed to *Guildford Park Junior Secondary: 1974*

When Mary Jane Shannon Junior High was officially opened on May 22, 1959, the guest of honour at the celebration was the woman for whom the school was named. Mary Jane Shannon had been one of the students in Surrey's first school, Clover Valley in 1882. Years later, after studying to become a teacher, she returned to Clover Valley School to teach grades one to eight.

Mary Jane Shannon Junior Secondary was renamed Guildford Park Junior Secondary in 1974 to avoid clerical mix-ups with Mary Jane Shannon Elementary which was on an adjacent site.

It was the first school in Surrey to be designated a "community school" (see "Community Schools" article) and was known during that time as Guildford Park Community School.

Guildford Park Junior Secondary closed at the end of June in 1983 and, when school began in September, the students and staff moved into the new Guildford Park Secondary at 10707 146th Street which had been built on the same property. The original Mary Jane Shannon Junior building was demolished.



Mary Jane Shannon Junior High, [196-]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.59

White Rock Junior High, 1959 - 1989

1785 148th Street

- Classes started: September 8, 1959
- Officially opened: October 2, 1959, by William Hodgson, Mayor of White Rock
- Name changed to *White Rock Junior Secondary: 1962*

White Rock Junior High was named for the White Rock community in which it was located and which had been named for the large, white boulder on the Semiahmoo Bay beach.

For a few years in the 1970s and 1980s, White Rock Junior High was one of Surrey's designated "community schools" (see "Community Schools" article) and was known during that time as White Rock Community School.



White Rock Junior High. Courtesy of White Rock Museum/Archives, 1998-16-136

On January 14, 1978, a fire destroyed a large part of the classroom block and the administration area. It was reported that Vice-Principal Mackenzie ran into the burning school and managed to save all the student records. The school was rebuilt and, while the new school was under construction, White Rock Junior Secondary's students attended classes on shift at Earl Marriott Secondary.

In 1989, White Rock Junior Secondary officially merged with Semiahmoo Secondary in a reconstructed and enlarged school building on the White Rock Junior site and the old building was demolished.

Newton Junior High, 1959 - 1994

12870 72nd Avenue (1959 - 1961), and 13220 64th Avenue (1961 - 1994)

- Classes started: September 1959
- Officially opened: November 6, 1959
- Name changed to *Newton Junior Secondary: 1962*



Newton Junior High School (first site: 1959-1961). Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SM.1125B



Newton Junior High School, 1965. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC2560 & NC2561

Newton Junior High School opened at 12870 72nd Avenue in September of 1959. At the beginning of the 1961/62 school year, the students and staffs of Newton Junior High and Princess Margaret Senior High switched locations. (Classes had been attending Princess Margaret Senior High at 13220 64th Avenue since December 4, 1950.)



Basketball tournament. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.18159

Newton Junior High School was in operation at the 13220 64th Avenue site until the end of June in 1994. In September of that year, the teachers and students of Newton Junior Secondary moved to a new school - Tamanawis Secondary - at 12600 66th Avenue. The old Newton Junior High building reopened as the Surrey Traditional School at the beginning of the 1994/95 school year. It occupied this site until June of 2003 when its students and staff relocated to the former Len Shepherd Secondary at 13875 113th Avenue. The old Newton Junior Secondary School on 64th Avenue was demolished in August 2003 and a new school - Panorama Ridge Secondary - was built on the site.

William Beagle Junior Secondary, 1962 - 1999

9160 128th Street

- Classes started: September 1962
- Officially opened: October 18, 1962, by Leslie Peterson, B.C. Minister of Education

The school was named in honour of William Beagle, a Surrey School Trustee who also served as Chairperson of the School Board for a time. He was the grandson of A.H.P. Matthew for whom a school in Surrey was also named. William Beagle Junior Secondary closed in June of 1999 and its students were transferred to Queen Elizabeth Secondary in September of 1999. The original William Beagle school was renovated and reopened as David Brankin Elementary on January 5, 2000.



William Beagle Junior Secondary School, 1965. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC2569

Cloverdale Junior High, 1959 - 1993

17857 56th Avenue (1959 - 1963), and 5811 184th Street (1963 - 1993)

-First year on the annual report to the Ministry: 1959/60

-Name changed to *Cloverdale Junior Secondary: 1962*

-Officially opened (184th Street site): June 14, 1963 by Dr. J.F.K. English, Deputy Minister of Education



Above: Cloverdale Junior High (the first site, formerly Surrey High), [196-]. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA81.042.54
Below: Cloverdale Junior Secondary School (second site), ca. July 1963. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 1992.036.313



up the hill on 180th Street (formerly Pratt Road). Grades seven and eight were left in the old school and students in grades seven and eight from the surrounding area's elementary schools were moved to the site. In 1959, the school was renamed Cloverdale Junior High.



Typing class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.15176

Background information: When Surrey's pioneer children finished elementary school in the 1890s and early 1900s, they had to travel to New Westminster, Langley or Blaine in order to attend high school. This changed in 1912 when the five-room Cloverdale Public School opened with one class of first-year high school students. The school was built on New McLellan Road (now Hwy #10) on site of the present-day Cloverdale Elementary School. Over the years, students in grades one through twelve have attended school on this site and a series of new schools, additions

and replacement buildings have been constructed to meet

the needs of the community. Restructuring, and renaming of the schools, has occurred often. Schools at this site have included Cloverdale Public School, Cloverdale Superior School, Surrey High School, Central Junior-Senior High School, Lord Tweedsmuir Junior-Senior High, Cloverdale Junior High, Cloverdale Elementary and Surrey Traditional School.

In the early to mid-1950s, Lord Tweedsmuir Junior-Senior High and Cloverdale Elementary shared the "New McLellan Road site". In 1957, the students in grades nine to twelve were moved to the new Lord Tweedsmuir Senior High building

In 1963, a newly-built Cloverdale Junior Secondary opened at 5811 184th Street (formerly Hall's Prairie Road) and the old school on Hwy #10 became Cloverdale Elementary. For a short time in the 1970s to 1980s, the junior secondary was designated a "community school" (see "Community Schools" article).

In the Fall of 1993, Cloverdale Junior Secondary and Lord Tweedsmuir Senior Secondary joined together as Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary. Their students and staffs moved into a brand-new, larger facility just north of the school which had opened on 184th Street in 1957. The junior secondary building reopened as École Martha Currie Elementary.

L.A. Matheson Junior Secondary, 1970

9484 122nd Street

- Classes started: Jan. 19, 1970
- Officially opened: April 23, 1970
- Last year as a junior secondary: 1997/98
- First year as L.A. Matheson Secondary School (Grades 8 to 12): 1998/99

L.A. Matheson Junior Secondary was named after Laughlin Alexander Matheson. He taught in the district and spent 16 years as the principal of Queen Elizabeth High School before being appointed Inspector of Schools.

L.A. Matheson Junior Secondary was a feeder school to Queen Elizabeth Secondary for nearly 30 years. In 1998, after the building was reconstructed and enlarged, L.A. Matheson became a full secondary school, enrolling grades eight through twelve.

At the time of this writing, the school has been in operation for more than 55 years



Field hockey. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.9221



L.A. Matheson Secondary, March 2025. Courtesy of Karen Bentzen

Len Shepherd Junior Secondary, 1970 - 2002

13875 113th Avenue

- Classes started: January 19, 1970
- Officially opened: May 1, 1970

Len Shepherd Junior Secondary was named in honour of Len Shepherd, a Surrey School Trustee. Mr. Shepherd also served for a time on Surrey's City Council.

Len Shepherd Junior Secondary served its community well for over 31 years. It was the original location of the Inter-A Program. Developed in the mid 1970s, the program was based on developing leadership skills through co-operation, self-motivation and creativity. Len Shepherd closed its doors in June of 2002 and in September of that year, the students of Len Shepherd (including the Inter-A Program) and West Whalley Junior Secondaries were amalgamated at the new Kwantlen Park Secondary at 10441 132nd Street. The original Len Shepherd building reopened as the Surrey Traditional School in September of 2003.



Len Shepherd Junior High (now Surrey Traditional School), March 2025. Courtesy of Karen Bentzen

Frank Hurt Junior Secondary, 1973/74

13940 77nd Avenue

- First year on the annual report to the Ministry: 1973/74
- Classes started at the new junior secondary school: May 1974
- Officially opened: October 10, 1974
- Last year as a junior secondary: 1973/74
- First year as Frank Hurt Secondary School: 1974/75 with grades eight through eleven. Grade twelve was added in 1975/76.

When the 1973/74 school year started, Frank Hurt Junior Secondary was still under construction. Its students and staff were on shift at Newton Junior Secondary while they were waiting for their new school to be built. In mid-May of 1974, students and staff moved into their newly-built school.

The school was named after Frank Hurt who was a teacher, vice-principal and principal in the Surrey School District. He was the first principal of William Beagle Junior Secondary and was holding that position at the time of his sudden death in 1970. After his passing, his colleagues and students were successful in petitioning the Surrey School Board to name a school in his honour. At the time of this writing, the school has been in operation for 52 years.



Frank Hurt Secondary, 2024. Courtesy of Karen Bentzen

Earl Marriott Junior Secondary, 1973

15751 16th Avenue

- Officially opened: November 4, 1974, by Mr. J.A. Canty, Superintendent of Administrative Services (Department of Education)
- Last year as a junior secondary: 1973/74
- First year as Earl Marriott Secondary School: 1974/75, with grades eight through eleven. Grade twelve was added in 1975/76.

Referred to as the East White Rock Junior Secondary School in its planning stages, the school was renamed to honour Earl Marriott, a principal who eventually became the Superintendent of the Surrey School District.



Earl Marriott Secondary, 2024. Courtesy of Karen Bentzen

Earl Marriott Junior Secondary opened in September of 1973. Its students and staff were on shift at White Rock Junior Secondary until the construction of their new school was completed. An official opening ceremony was held at the new school on November 4th, 1974. In 2000, the school was rebuilt and enlarged. At the time of this writing, Earl Marriott has been in operation for 52 years. It is one of four secondary schools in Surrey which offer French Immersion classes.



Science class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 1992.036.15186



Metalwork class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.15178



Woodworking class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SA1992.036.15189



Sewing class. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 1992.036.15193



Language lab. Courtesy of Surrey Archives. SA1992.036.15171

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

In the 1970s, the “community schools” concept was introduced in the Surrey School District. Three junior secondary schools (Cloverdale, White Rock and Guildford Park) and two elementary schools (Bridgeview and Holly) were designated as “community schools”.

The goal of the program was to maximize the use of school facilities in the after-school hours and on weekends. Each designated school had its own community school staff and there was a Parks and Recreation supervisor at each secondary school. A wide variety of services, including courses, workshops and recreational activities, were offered to the community.

Unfortunately, by the mid-1980s, the school board was forced to discontinue the community schools program due to budget cuts.

THE HERITAGE COMMITTEE - A Short History

At the SRTA Executive meeting of April 29, 2010 Trudy Rutherford requested help to sort and organize teaching materials and artifacts she had collected over many years. A Heritage Committee was formed and since its inaugural meeting on May 11, 2010 several people have volunteered. Alice Tiles, Karen Bentzen, and Karen Susheski are the current members. Initially meeting at the Rutherford home, we soon realized the wide scope of the Committee and began searching for work and storage space. We met with the Tynehead Community Association to investigate the use of Anniedale Heritage School and toured other schools with possible space, eventually finding a temporary home at the decommissioned Grandview Heights Elementary. February 10, 2011 saw us, along with two STA executive members and three members of the Tynehead Community Association, presenting our “Goals and Objectives” to the Surrey School Board. With financial help from the SRTA and various grants we were able to purchase equipment and supplies as well as plan future projects. We collected, sorted and inventoried materials, contacted Heritage Committees in other school districts, and examined materials at the Surrey Archives. Through persistence, in July 2017, a room at the District Education Centre was made available to us.

Our first major project began June 2011 when we approached Elgin Park Secondary to assist with our Oral History Project. In November 2011, with the aid of the school’s students and staff, we began recording the teaching memories of 24 Surrey retired educators. The Oral History CDs and transcriptions were gifted to the Surrey Archives October 2013. In July 2021, we published “Snapshots - Memories of the Surrey School District”. “Snapshots 2 - Developments in the Surrey School District in the 1950s” is the committee’s latest publication.

Over the years the committee has sponsored activities, workshops, and attended school functions. We regularly submit Heritage articles to the SRTA’s publication “Chatter” and maintain contact with the Surrey Historical Society and the Surrey and White Rock Archives.

Trudy Rutherford (1935-2012)

The Heritage Committee wishes to dedicate “Snapshots 2” to Trudy Rutherford.

Trudy taught for 35 years in Surrey, mainly at the Simon Cunningham Annex on King George Highway and then the “new” Simon Cunningham Elementary on 140th Street.

Both housed students with special needs. She was an advocate for equal education opportunities for her students and for their appropriate integration into regular classes. She was a “doer”, doing what needed to be done without any fanfare. Her experience as a teacher of Special Education, her gentle and caring manner, and her sense of humour established her as a highly regarded teacher and a treasure to all.

After retirement Trudy and her husband Bruce became members of the Surrey Retired Teachers’ Association. Trudy took on the role of Historian and collected information about school and district events. She organized, labelled, and filed it all in binders. When she requested help, other Executive members volunteered and thus began the SRTA Heritage Committee. Eventually, Trudy and Bruce gifted everything to the Heritage Committee. What a wonderful legacy for the Surrey School District and city.



A message from the SRTA Heritage Committee...

The history of Surrey Schools has been difficult to trace because of student, staff, and administration changes and, while most remember their particular years, few know the history of their school. We hope "Snapshots 2 - Developments in the Surrey School District in the 1950s" has stirred many memories of the Surrey School District.

Please contact us with any feedback, corrections, additional information, or a story to share at the email address below.

srtaheritage@gmail.com

Regards,
The SRTA Heritage Committee,
Alice Tiles (Chairperson)
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To read either of the Heritage Committee's publications, type its title into your browser.

-Snapshots - Memories of the Surrey School District, or

-Snapshots 2 - Developments in the Surrey School District in the 1950s

Lastly, we would like to thank Kirsty Senior for her excellent work with the graphics on both of the above-mentioned documents.

Back cover images:

1. Newton Junior High School, 8 Oct. 1959. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SM.1128
2. School Board Introduction, Jan. 1959. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, NC703
3. Marine Drive White Rock. Courtesy of White Rock Museum and Archives.
4. Newton Jr. High Opening. Courtesy Surrey Archives, NC825D
5. Lord Tweedsmuir High School Student Council. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, SMA92.008.02
6. Bicycles at Prince Charles Elementary School. Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 1992.036.2564

