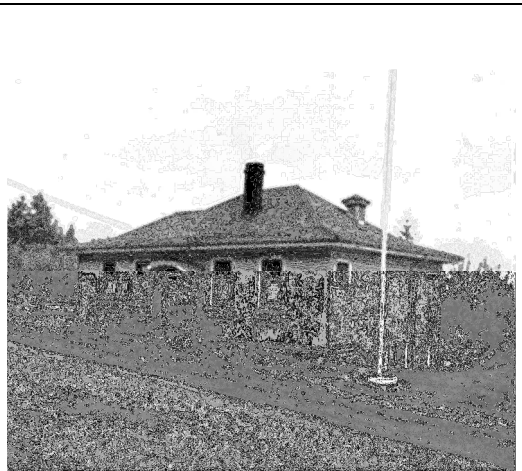


Background Information

This project is undertaken by members of the Cowichan Valley Retired Teachers' Association who have formed the Cowichan Valley Schools Heritage Society, with the financial support of the British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association. Our aim is to preserve the educational history of School District 79. This project focuses on the old schools no longer in service, approximately 90 of which have been identified. For Phase One, 15 of these schools are honoured with signage in the shape of a school bell placed as close as possible to the original site of the school.



Bamberton School

Image I-22939 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Thank you to the following supporters:

British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association
City of Duncan
Cowichan District Teachers' Association
Cowichan Historical Society
Cowichan Valley Regional District
Cowichan Valley Retired Teachers' Association
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Marie Skertchly
Mark's Instant Signs
Municipality of North Cowichan
School District No.79 (Cowichan Valley)

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COWICHAN VALLEY HISTORIC SCHOOLS PROJECT - PHASE 1 - 2012/3



Duncan High School, 1912

Image 1993.01.2.2 courtesy of the Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives

Cowichan Valley Schools Heritage Society

HISTORIC SCHOOLS OF THE COWICHAN VALLEY

Below are sites of former schools in our school district. Some of the buildings are still standing while others have been moved, burned or torn down. We invite you to visit these sites on a self-directed tour with start/finish in Duncan. Look for the gold school bell-shaped signs.

1 . Alderlea School Alderlea was a two-room wooden schoolhouse built in 1891 on one acre of land. Richard J. Hawkey taught the first four months after the school opened and Miss Alice M. Haldon completed the year. Prior to its closure in 1912 the school was known as Duncan Public School. The property has been owned by the City of Duncan since 1920. Sometime in the 1950s it was again used as a public school and re-dubbed Zenith School. Now leased to Arcadian Day Care, the site can be found behind the Round Building at 5650 Club Road, Duncan.

2 . Duncan High School The Valley's first public high school was built in 1911 near the corner of Cairnsmore and Nagle Streets in Duncan on the same property where Duncan Elementary School is located. Mr. Victor Woodworth was the first principal. The school burned to the ground in March 1946. No structure remains.

3 . Duncan Grammar School Opened by Robert Honour in 1926 as a private school for boys, the facility was located on the property where the Cowichan District Hospital stands today. The school closed in 1950. No structure remains. The precise site of the school is the long grassy area on the west side of the hospital.

4 . Gibbins Road School This public school opened in 1962 for local students in grades one through seven and was later used to house grade four only. An annex of Duncan Elementary School,

it closed permanently in 1983. The property, now owned by the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, Squadron 744, can be found at 3790 Gibbins Road, Duncan.

5 . Nitinat School Camp 3 was a thriving logging community when the three-room school was built there in 1937. One of its long time teachers was Mrs. Emily Garnett. The school was torn down in 1976. The original site can be seen at Kissinger Lake Campsite, west of Youbou.

6 . Honeymoon Bay School A busy mill town, Honeymoon Bay opened its school in 1956 at 10028 Park Drive. The school was closed in 2002 and the site sold. The school building is now a part of the Honeymoon Bay Lodge and Retreat on the original school grounds.

7 . Second Somenos School William Drinkwater donated land for the school built on Drinkwater Road opposite the Mountain View Cemetery and just east of the Drinkwater and Somenos Roads' intersection. It opened in 1885 with Mr. Edward Stuart Wood as the first teacher. The one-room school closed in 1914. No structure remains.

8 . First Crofton School Built in 1905 as a one room wooden building, the school was located at 1658 Roberts Street, Crofton. The first teacher, Mr. Rhynois Offerhaus, died three months after the school opened. Miss Olive Randle taught the remainder of that first school year. The school closed in 1950. The building was later moved to the eastern end of Joan Street where it now serves as the Crofton Museum.

9 . First Maple Bay School The first publicly constructed school in the Cowichan Valley was built in 1870 on Herd Road directly opposite the north end of Lakes Road. First known as North Cowichan School and later as Maple Bay School, it finally closed in 1918. No structure remains. The school was located at what is now 1959 Herd Road.

10 . Maple Bay School This four-room school opened in 1961 with 161 students in grades 1 to 7. Two more classrooms and a gymnasium were added in 1963. The school closed in 2000 and the property sold. The former school can be found at 6759 Considine Road in Maple Bay.

11 . Quamichan School Mrs. Annie Monk was the first teacher at this public school built in 1885 on land purchased by the Bishop of British Columbia with money donated by Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts. It closed in 1918. For a time the building was used as a Scout hall until it burnt down sometime in the 1980s. The school was located at what is now 5847 Indian Road, Duncan.

12 . Third Bench School Mr. and Mrs. John Nelson donated land for the third Bench School which was built in 1885 with Eli Joseph Campbell as the first teacher. It closed when the fourth (and current) Bench School replaced it in 1950 on the same property at 1501 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay. For a time the third school was used as a community hall. No structure remains today.

13 . Cobble Hill High School The first public high school at the south end of the Cowichan Valley opened in 1931 as an extension of Cobble Hill Elementary. The school, built in 1914, was renovated to accommodate grades 9 through 12. Miss Iola Worthington, the first principal, had 16 students in grades 9 and 10. It ended as a high school in 1950 and carried on as an elementary school until it was finally replaced. The property was sold in 2008 and is now Evergreen Independent School. The address is 3515 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill.

14 . Bamberton School Miss Irma Glyde Trowsse taught children of the employees of the BC Cement Company from 1924 until the school closed in 1961. The schoolhouse, built in 1927, was sold and moved off site in 1977 to a private farm in Cobble Hill. Its original location was up the hill on the main street of the Bamberton townsite.

15 . York Road Primary Built in 1914 on York Road as a primary annex to Duncan Elementary School, the school closed in 1971. The original site is where the log building now stands at 460 Trans-Canada Highway in Duncan. The property was sold and the schoolhouse moved in 1972 to the west side of MacAdam Park on Wharnccliffe Road in Duncan where it now serves as a day care facility.