

# Urban Schools

## Consolidation Schools

In the early Pioneer Period (before 1880), the entire area was dotted by rural school sections and dispersed one room schools. There were only a few, small hamlets of a few hundred people. Even as late as 1850, Lindsay's population had not cracked 1,000 residents. The hamlets and villages were still serviced by one room schools, the same as the rural school sections. But as our area changed, the school section began to change too. Villages began to grow as people concentrated in towns. The first reaction was to add another one room (or two) to the original one room school. But soon that was not suitable and large multi-room, multi-level school houses appeared in the larger centres. Consolidation was on the way!

As the 1900s dawned, population fluctuations began to appear in the rural areas. The school age population peaked about 1900, and then started to fall. Some school sections experienced student decline. Some school sections were discontinued and students consolidated in nearby schools. The biggest issue still was transportation. Students could only walk so far and thus small schools were kept open with less than 10 students because there was no transportation option.

After 1920, modern transportation became more readily available. It paid the trustees to "bus" their students to other schools. Many still used horse-drawn conveyances. Larger schools attracted more-qualified teachers and (supposedly) delivered better quality education. The township councils could save money by closing under-attended schools. Small, rural schools with few students were closed in the name of progress.

Schools were still operated on a township basis, so consolidated schools were often set up in the largest village in each township. Glamorgan Township closed 3 one room schools around Gooderham (1923) and opened one of the first consolidated schools in the northern area. Other townships followed; replacing the multitude of one room schools in the vicinity with one larger, multi-room school. Of course, continuation (high school) classes could also be offered in the new monoliths. Bussing was necessary, but the advantages outweighed the drawbacks. Thus the trend was set. Small schools were amalgamated into large schools and students bussed to the bigger towns. By 1965, the Government of Ontario cancelled all one room schools in the province. As the student population continues to decline, the amalgamations keep on happening.

## Amalgamations

The continuing movement towards larger schools away from one room schools continued. By the 1930s, the provincial government abolished the school section and instituted the township board of education. Most townships further consolidated their schools due to falling enrolment, cost factors and desire to improve the quality of education. Each township board of trustees eventually replaced their one room schools with consolidated schools, mostly located in villages or towns. This policy was capped by the 1965 closure of all remaining one room schools.

In 1969, the province dissolved all township boards and gave responsibility for schools to the County Boards. The amalgamations continued as many of the township (consolidated) schools were closed and large regional schools substituted. Today, the number of elementary schools continues to fall, primarily due to dropping enrolment. In 1993, the Great Northern Amalgamation converted 5 northern township elementary schools into two regional schools. Gone were Kinmount, Burnt River and Norland Schools. Great protests preceded the amalgamation, but the era of the small school was over.

In Haliburton County, only Minden, Haliburton Village, Dorset, Wilberforce and Cardiff have elementary schools today. The latter three survive only because of geography! Their student numbers are tiny, but the nearest large schools are far away (or outside the Board boundaries).

In Victoria County, the elementary schools are down to the following: Woodville, Oakwood, Little Britain, Kirkfield, Coboconk, Cameron, Fenelon Falls, Bobcaygeon, Dunsford, Omemee, Ops +6 schools in Lindsay.

As numbers continue to fall, there is more amalgamation talk!

**Photos:**

- \*1. Glamorgan Township Consolidation School (Gooderham) SS #2, SS #4, SS #5 amalgamated in 1923
- \*2. Victoria Street Consolidation School Haliburton
- \*3. Laxton, Digby & Longford Consolidated School, Norland. Consolidated (eventually) in this school were SS #1 Norland, SS #2 Beech Lake, SS #3 Head Lake, SS #1 Digby, SS # 2 Uphill.
- \*4. Bexley Consolidation School, Coboconk. All Bexley students were sent here by 1965.
- \*5. Somerville Consolidation School, Kinmount. When the last one room schools were closed in 1965, students from Irondale, Dongola and Galway (Union Creek) were sent to the closest "village" school. Four townships in 3 counties used Kinmount Public School.
- \*6. Somerville Consolidated School, Burnt River. All students in south Somerville attended this school 1958-1993.
- \*7. Cardiff Township Consolidated School Highland Grove. Closed 1965.
- \*8. Lindsay Union School 1863-1910. The booming population of Lindsay needed a school reorganization. Thus all the previous schools were closed and most of the town students consolidated into this architectural masterpiece of 6 classrooms (later 8).  
The architectural style has been called a "mangled medieval abbey" and a "shoddy castle", but for its era, it was an impressive structure! The school balkanized after 1910 into ward schools & LCVI Collegiate.

**Elementary Schools Currently operating: City of Kawartha Lakes**  
(# of students as of 2017)

Woodville Public School (220)  
Dr George Hall Public School, Little Britain. (325)  
Mariposa Public School, Oakwood. (379)  
Lady Mackenzie Public School, Kirkfield (317)  
Ridgewood Public School, Coboconk (233)  
Langton Public School, Fenelon Falls (370)  
Bobcaygeon Public School (371)  
Dunsford Public School (262)  
Lady Eaton Public School, Omemee (215)  
Scott Young Public School, Omemee (201)  
Fenelon Township Public School, Cameron (160)  
Jack Callaghan Public School, Ops outside Lindsay (240)

**Haliburton County Schools currently in operation**

Wilberforce Elementary School (61)  
J D Hodgson Elementary School, Haliburton (297)  
Stuart Baker Elementary School, Haliburton (287)  
Cardiff Elementary School (52)  
Archie Stouffer Elementary School, Minden (405)  
Irwin Memorial Public School, Dwight — for Dorset

**Harvey Township**

Buckhorn Public School.



**\*8 Lindsay Union School**





Opening Day, May 1923

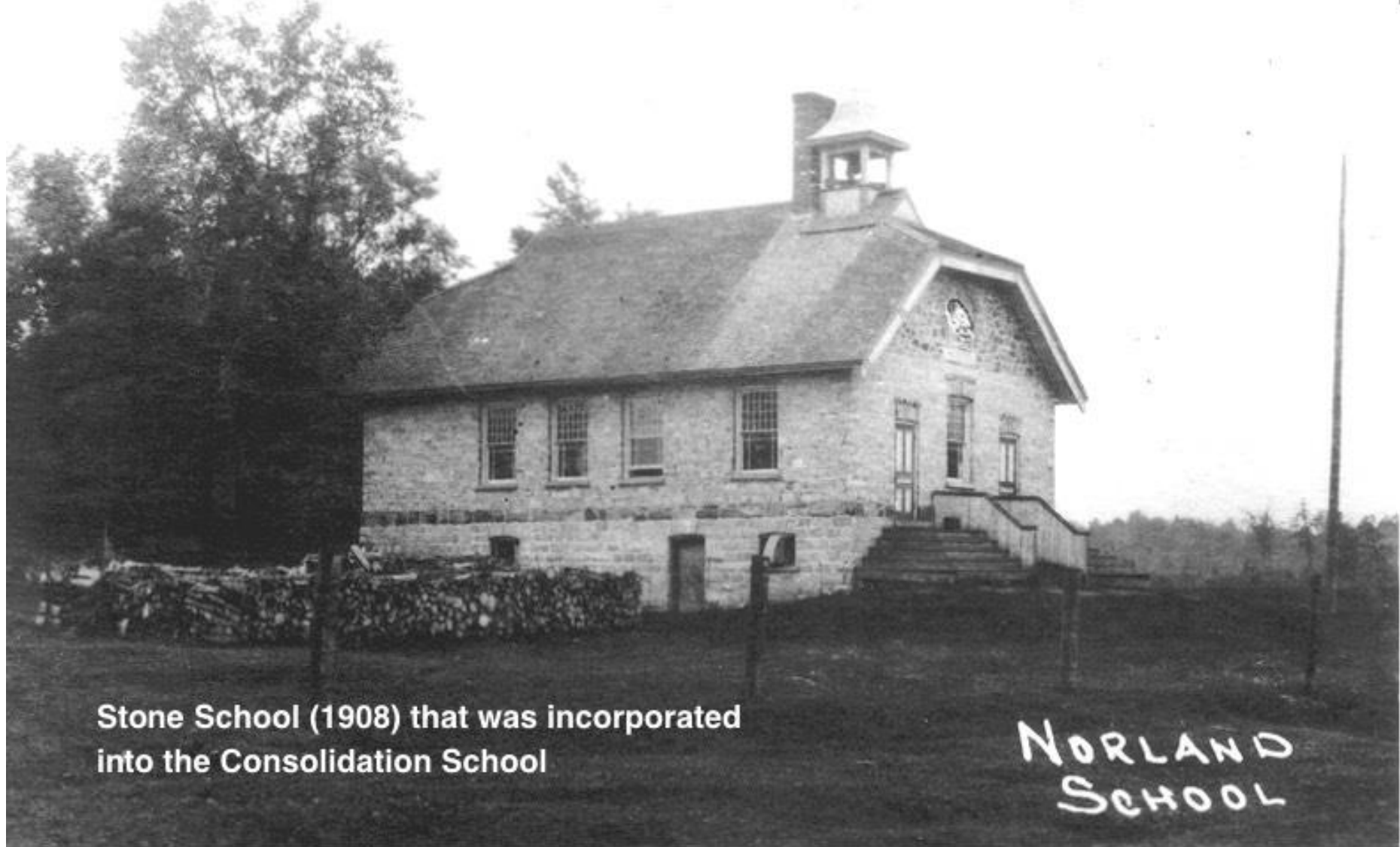
Senior Girls - Irene Hunter, Leona Pickens, Audrey Madill and Claribel Hadley

Junior Girls - Unknown, Clara McColl, Emma Madill and Unknown

**\*1 Glamorgan Township Consolidation School, Gooderham**



**\*2 Victoria Street Consolidation School, Haliburton**



Stone School (1908) that was incorporated  
into the Consolidation School

NORLAND  
SCHOOL

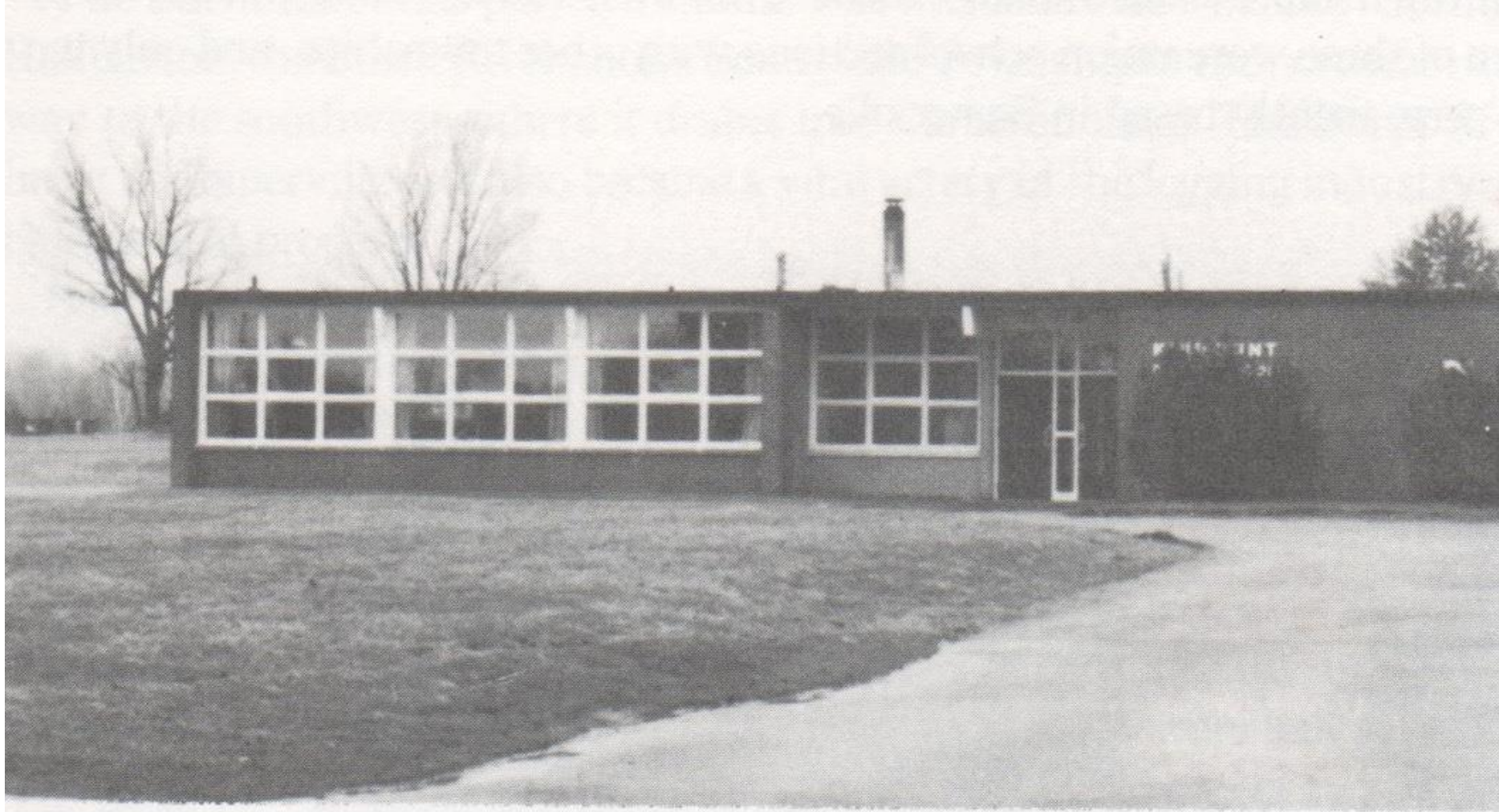
**\*3 Laxton, Digby & Longford Consolidated School, Norland**





**\*4 Bexley Consolidation School, Coboconk**





**\*5 Somerville Consolidation School, Kinmount**



**\*6 Somerville Consolidated School, Burnt River**

**Public / Elementary**

**Schools**

**Today**





**Irwin Memorial Public School**  
Dwight — Serves students from Dorset



**J Douglas Hodgson Elementary School  
Haliburton**





**Stuart W. Baker Elementary School  
Haliburton**





**Archie Stouffer Elementary School, Minden**



# Cardiff Elementary School





**Wiberforce Elementary School**





**Ridgewood Public School  
Coboconk**



**Langton Public School  
Fenelon Falls**

## Bobcaygeon Public School







**Dunsford District Elementary School**



**Lady Mackenzie Public School  
Kirkfield**





**Fenelon Township Public School  
Cameron**





**Woodville Elementary School**

# Mariposa Elementary School Oakwood







**Dr. George Hall Public School  
Little Britain**





**Jack Callaghan Public School  
Ops**



**Lady Eaton Elementary School  
Omeme**



**Scott Young Public School  
Omeme**



