

A HISTORY OF KING EDWARD CAMPUS LIBRARY

its evolution,
expansion and role in the network of British
Columbia Libraries.

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CHAPTER 2 : KING EDWARD - THE BEGINNING YEARS

The history of King Edward is almost a mini-history of education in the city of Vancouver. Known in the very beginning as Vancouver High School, King Edward was Vancouver's first secondary school, and indeed for almost 25 years its only one. The early technical and commercial schools were a direct offshoot of "King Ed" as it was affectionately known, and even the now prestigious University of British Columbia sprang from its roots.

On January 6, 1890 when Vancouver itself was only four years old, twenty five boys and girls enrolled in the first high-school class. By the end of the year, Principal Robert Law was paid \$100 per month to teach the twenty one girls and ten boys everything from Algebra to Zoology. During its first decade, the school flourished, and by 1893 moved into an eight room brick building in the city centre. At the beginning of the 1899-1900 term it changed its name to Vancouver High School and College, and as an affiliate of McGill University in Montreal provided a first year course in arts. By 1903 a larger building was needed, and approval was given to a \$125,000 by-law to build it. The next Vancouver City Council passed the by-law, students celebrated by parading through the streets and on to the homes of their teachers. During the following year, 1904 a young student by the name of Robert W. Service enrolled for a period of forty days, prior to heading north and eventual fame as the poet responsible for Bar Room Ballads, and other memorable writings on the far north

On January 5, 1905 the school moved to its new home, a handsome brick building topped by a great dome, situated on the hill at Fairview, at that time a residential district just emerging from the forest. In 1907 the College was divorced from the high school, and nine years later the Province of British Columbia founded its own university. In 1909 the city established a second high school which was named Britannia, and the original Vancouver High School was renamed after the reigning monarch, King Edward VII.

It was also in 1909 that the School Board initiated the Adult "Night School" program, thus giving adults an opportunity to continue with their education, and initiating post secondary education into the Province.

There is little doubt that from its early days King Edward High School had its own library. In November 1903, College Wide Awake has an entry "Our Library", indicating that very important additions were received during the academic year 1902-3 being paid for from "... the considerable fund being provided from the fee paid by McGill University to the Deputy Examiner, Dr. McGuigan, who generously hands it over each year to be expended in the purchase of books." There is also a brief mention that "the library catalogue includes a total of 550 titles".

The school magazine of January 1904 describes the new building which will be available "...on the first of September next. The ground floor will contain eight class rooms, two cloak rooms, the teachers' room and a waiting room. On the first floor will be ten class rooms, the library and the lecture room, the latter with a sloping floor and capable of seating about one hundred. On the second floor is the Grand Assembly Room, estimated to hold six hundred. From this floor a spiral staircase leads to the cupola which is open on all sides, and from this there will be a magnificent view."

It is obvious from this description that the new school was to be quite substantial, and it is not unreasonable to assume that such facilities as lecture room and library were already in existence in the old building.

The size or scope of this library is alas not documented. We get a tantalising glimpse and proof that the library existed in a photograph taken in 1908- "Vancouver High School Reading Circle". The photograph carries the notation that "...a reading circle sponsored by Mr. G.G.Sedgewick M.A. which met in the high school library....".The photograph shows and names nine females and two males, but nothing of the background is discernable.

Was this library adequate? Was it properly administered and funded? Did it meet the needs of the students and teachers? Surviving records alas do not give the answer.

Documented history is very sparse, and much of what is known today of the early history is culled from surviving copies of the various school magazines. King Edward seems to have had more than a fair share of these school magazines and similar publications.

The first to see light of day was titled The Moon, with two issues in 1899-1900. Next came The College Wide Awake in 1903-04, to be followed by The College Argus from 1905 to 1909. The year 1911 saw the brief flowering of The Junior Science Surveyor (also known as Science Surveyor) and then also in 1911 The Preliminary Gazette which in 1912 became The Stranger. 1912 also saw the publication of The Grad published in June. Vox Discipuli was published four times in 1913, and 1913 also saw the first Matric Annual. 1913-14 saw a further run of The College Argus, and although Matric Annual seems to have missed in 1914, we then get a continuous publication from 1915 to 1930. From 1931 this became called The King Edward High School Annual.

In December 1928, The Blue and the White was first published. (Blue and white were the official school colours). The only other early publication was that of the Literary and Athletic Association which apparently published a newspaper called The Chinook during the early twenties.

Of all these publications, only scattered incomplete runs and single copies survive in library collections into the 1980's. The search continues, and hopefully at least a few more will eventually be added to those occasional copies held in the King Edward Campus History/Archive collection in the new library.

By 1917, the importance of an adequate library would seem to be recognised, and some criticism of the existing facility is to be found in the Report of Principals Vance and Mackay on the school system in Vancouver. They criticise that "...King Edward High School ranks low in the percentage of passes secured..... It has been an experimental station for new departures in education.....doing work of a Commercial and Technical School (as well as a high school)".

The pamphlet includes recommendations on reorganisation of staffing subject teaching areas, teachers appointments etc. and as part of the recommendations, suggests "that a Special Teachers Library containing the best books and magazines on educational questions be provided either by the School Board or as a Department of the Carnegie Library." It also recommends that "Teachers be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the needs of their pupils in the matter of general readings and that the Board provide either separate libraries in the various schools or co-operate with the Carnegie Library in providing a Childrens Section in the various Branch libraries of the city."

CHAPTER 3 : EVOLUTION OF A MULTI-CAMPUS COLLEGE

As previously stated it was in 1909 that the Adult "Night School" program was initiated by the School Board. In 1929, the Vancouver School of Art was founded, to be joined in 1945 by the Vancouver Vocational Institute. The year 1962 saw the establishment of the King Edward Senior Matriculation and Continuing Education Centre in the King Edward High School.

In 1965, the four separate yet complementary institutions were combined to become "Vancouver City College". Initially the King Edward Campus grew most rapidly, and by October 1970 a new larger campus was officially opened to cater for the increased demands. Situated at the 100 block, 49th Avenue, this became known as Langara Campus. The opening of the new 20 acre Langara Campus was only a temporary respite for King Edward operations. King Edward Campus was not abandoned, and a new "Special Programs Division" was established there as a fifth centre. The S.P. Division continued to expand, and very quickly the name reverted to King Edward, a name which has remained ever since. Course offerings were Adult Special Education and some English as a Second Language - basically an opportunity for adults into academic upgrading to High School equivalency and basic training and skill development.

As will be discussed more fully in a later chapter, responsibility for the college was shifted in 1970 from the Vancouver School Board to a new body, the Vancouver Community College Council, comprising a council of six members (two appointed by Vancouver School Board and four appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council of the Province of British Columbia). Until 1978, the College operated as a quasi-independent institution governed by the Public Schools Act. Under the Colleges and Provincial Institutes Act proclaimed in 1979, the college Board has comprised five members since 1978. Just prior to this legislation, the Vancouver College of Art became independent and today operates as a separate College Institution in its own right, in purpose designed premises at Granville Island, and known as the Emily Carr College of Art.

The King Edward Building on Oak Street at 12th Avenue continued to be well patronised. On June 19, 1973 a fire broke out in the attic near the dome, and by late afternoon most of the original building had been gutted. No one was injured in the fire, but until new classrooms were built, classes had to be held at various locations around the town, including Langara, Dawson School and John Oliver High School. At the time of this fire there were 2400 students and 144 instructors - two years later when things were back to normal, there were over 4300 students and 275 faculty members. By this time, the Special Programs Division as it had been renamed was offering classes not only at the main campus, but also at nearly forty different outreach locations scattered throughout Vancouver.

The 1960's are a little better documented than the preceding decades, but again there is not overmuch reference to library or library services.

A Report on Organisation for the Information of the Academic Board of British Columbia, Dated December 21, 1964 makes reference to Facilities....

"Buildings:

a) Pending the development of a new campus, the present King Edward Adult Centre at 12th and Oak and the Annex at 12th and Ash will be used. These facilities are very old but there are sufficient classrooms to undertake a college program. The laboratory equipment has been kept up to date and is adequate for first-year level university courses. A few offices for faculty are available and more will be provided before September 1965.

b) Second year course will be offered only if it is considered feasible to provide equipment and facilities needed.

Library and Study Facilities.

a) The library proper, located on the third floor, is approximately 70' x 70' and seats 150 students. It contains approximately 8500 books and is staffed by two librarians and

student clerical help. Special attention is being given to provision of a much larger selection of books and periodicals.

b) On the main floor a reading room seating approximately 120 students has been provided. Additional seating space is now being developed by the construction of six smaller study areas ranging in area from 20' x 20' to 10' x 12'. These are designed to encourage independent study by students wishing to work in groups and enable students to organise seminars relating to their work. Part of one gymnasium is being converted to serve as a student common room. This area is adjacent to the new study areas.

c) The library and study facilities are open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, and on Saturday mornings.

Language Laboratories:

The Centre has a language laboratory consisting of a centrally controlled 15-station unit in one room and another laboratory with 15 tape recorders. Both units are available to all departments. These facilities are used mainly for the teaching of a second language but are also used by the Department of English for literary appreciation and by other departments for self-testing purposes. The language laboratory and learning tapes are under the supervision of a person appointed to the library staff."

A news bulletin to Parent-Teacher Associations from the Vancouver School Board (dated March 23, 1962) tells of the Board's resolution, Monday night March 19 as marking the conclusion of eight months' study by the Board Committee on Continuing Education and discussion with the Department of Education.

After giving a brief overview history of King Edward from 1903 to date, the bulletin tells of the new role ahead for King Edward.

"Next September King Edward will start a new role as B.C.'s first full-time adult education centre providing adults with opportunities to complete high school and senior matric.

The new centre will be operated differently than the traditional school, and will be in session day and night. It will have an open library, open study hall, and open cafeteria. Classes will be organized to provide discussion and tutoring sessions."

An unpublished letter from H.B.Smith, Asssistant Superintendent, Secondary Schools to Principals of Secondary Schools ,
re: King Edward Secondary School and dated May 8, 1962 confirmed that this extension of the senior matriculation offering for Vancouver would entail King Edward being operated as an adult centre.

Offerings will be designed..."...to place responsibility on students in keeping with their ages and maturity." and "The programme to be offered is planned specifically for Vancouver students wishing to continue into Grade XIII..... or for older persons wishing to return to complete high school.".

The registration directions and time schedule for King Edward 1963-1964, a day school for ADULTS operated by Vancouver Board of School Trustees, featuring Post-Secondary School Education makes mention among other things of:

"Library and Language Laboratory : The Centre maintains a very fine library-study hall for reading and study. Students are invited to use the extensive reference sections and borrow books on an overnight loan plan. The library will be open Monday to Thursday, 8.30 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. and Friday 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. In addition the Centre maintains a language laboratory with tapes for the instruction of students in foreign languages and other subjects.