

AN HISTORICAL STUDY  
OF  
THE HALIFAX HIGH SCHOOL

A thesis written in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Halifax High School had been established as a public institution for purposes of providing secondary education in the city of Halifax. The aims of the school had been high at all times and its curriculum had been based on that of the Halifax Grammar School which it replaced.

The Halifax Grammar School was established in Halifax in June, 1789 and remained the city's leading school until 1877 when it became the property of the Board of School Commissioners by an Act of the Provincial Legislature, for purposes of providing a public institution of secondary education for the citizens of Halifax.

The classes of the Halifax Grammar School were held originally in the building which housed the Legislature of the Province of Nova Scotia but was later moved to a property on Birmingham Street, two houses south of Spring Garden Road. This property also provided a dwelling for the headmaster. The rents derived from the Grammar School property after 1877 helped pay some of the expenses of the high school.

The original purpose in setting up the high school had been twofold. Firstly, it provided the

necessary educational step between the grade eight of the common schools to the colleges and universities, and secondly it provided teachers for the common schools.

The universities at that time stressed the study of the classics, particularly Latin and Greek. For this reason the high school stressed the same subjects. The teachers at that time were required, before being given employment in the public schools, to answer examinations set by the Department of Education. The high school provided the necessary courses of study to enable the teachers to qualify. It should be noted, however, that a majority of teachers in the public schools at that time and a majority of the applicants were women. The Halifax High School at no time provided an education for female students. This accounts to some extent for the small number of pupils in the school. Women who wished to enter the teaching profession were given advanced studies in the common schools. This was successful to some extent, as there was apparently no great shortage of teachers in the city of Halifax.

The Halifax High School provided free education to those pupils who could obtain a specified average on their entrance examinations. For those who could not

maintain such an average a tuition fee was charged. This system may prove to be a satisfactory arrangement for Canadian universities in the future.

The masters of the high school were of excellent calibre, many holding doctorates and all considered by the Board of School Commissioners to be experts in their fields. This is manifest in the fact that they were paid large salaries and given almost complete freedom to teach as they felt best. The order in which the subjects were taught and the amount of time spent on each subject was decided entirely within the school itself. For this reason no information exists today to indicate the system of marking used in the school.

Revenues derived mainly from public assessment, pupil fees and rents on property owned by the board paid the expense of maintaining the school. Among the latter were the grammar school property on Birmingham Street, the headmaster's dwelling on Spring Garden Road and the Deuchman property on Bishop Street which had been willed to the board.

It became evident to the board that the greater part of the expense of maintaining the school was being borne by the public assessment of the citizens of

Halifax and those whose children attended the school. As a county academy it would ease the tax burden on the people who lived within the limits of the city and all pupils would be admitted free. Accordingly the Halifax High School became the Halifax Academy by an act of the Legislature of the province of Nova Scotia on April 24th, 1885.

The Halifax High School represents a point of transition in secondary education in the city of Halifax. It marks a change from private secondary schooling to free public institutions on the High School level.

## CHAPTER I

### FOUNDATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

In 1872, the Board of School Commissioners of the city of Halifax considered the necessity of an advanced school for boys who had completed their grade eight and who were either too young to enter college or who were going into commercial occupations.

The main problem with the establishing of such a school was finance. It was felt by the board at the time and by successive boards that if a suitable structure could be set up both to house the school and to provide office space for the board a saving in rent could be effected. The problem was by no means solved in 1872 but as the years passed and the problems were attacked by succeeding boards the obstacles began to drop away.

The board knew that the Halifax Grammar School which had been established in 1780 for the instruction of boys from early age to college entrance provided an excellent pattern upon which to base a new high school. The aims of this school had been high and both master and students lived up to them. Its graduates took leading places in military, naval and commercial life.

The Board of School Commissioners believed that

if the Halifax Grammar School could be combined with the proposed high school a larger and more comprehensive system of education could be set up. With this in mind the members of the board and the trustees of the grammar school entered negotiations.

The Halifax Grammar School held several pieces of real estate, and invested stocks with a total value of \$20,000.00. The local government was also paying the headmaster of the school an annual grant of \$600.00. The grammar school also had an amount of \$5,210.39 cash on hand. This money would certainly be an asset in establishing a new school.

Aside from a financial problem, there was the difficulty of obtaining a suitable building as temporary housing for the school until a permanent building could be erected. It was thought that once agreements had been reached between the Board of School Commissioners and the Trustees of the Halifax Grammar School any delay in opening the new school would be dangerous. At a meeting of the board it was decided to have the Committee on School Sites and Buildings locate a building in which the high school might temporarily be housed until a definite site could be obtained and a building erected.



The committee reported an offer on the part of the Trustees of the old Freemasons' Hall. The Board agreed to accept the offer if the building could be obtained for at least one year. The rent agreed upon was \$350.00 per year. It was agreed at the same meeting that the new Halifax High School should commence classes in September, 1877.

The board proceeded to investigate the common schools in an attempt to establish the number of pupils who would be ready in September to enter the new high school. It was discovered that several schools provided very poor graduates but at least three schools were teaching at a level which would provide a maximum of ninety pupils. The examiner at that time assumed that about sixty of these would attend such a school if it were available and another twenty to thirty would in all likelihood come to this school from outside districts and at their own expense.

It was decided by the board that no boy should be admitted to the high school unless he was able to pass a satisfactory examination in English Literature, composition, analysis, grammar, geography, the Latin grammar, the first book of Euclid and up to simple equations in Algebra.

On March 1st, 1876 the Board of School Commissioners adopted the following resolution.

"Whereas in the opinion of the Board the time has now arrived when it is absolutely necessary that a high school should be established in the City of Halifax.

From information which is before the Board it is found that some \$14,000.00 would be available from the proceeds of the Old Grammar School besides some other amounts which have been bequeathed for educational purposes, in all amounting to \$20,000.00. This would be more than sufficient to build a suitable building. In addition to this the sum of \$600.00 per year now paid to Dr. Gilpin can be obtained and the Local Government we are led to believe will grant a liberal amount towards the teachers' salaries.

Therefore resolved, that a committee of three be formed to frame an act to be presented to the Provincial Legislature to place the funds of the grammar school in the hands of the Board of Commissioners as Trustees and also to look after and aid its passage through the House, and that they report at a meeting of the Board to be held on Wednesday the 8th inst., a draft of the bill and such other information as they may be able to gather".<sup>1</sup>

It was agreed at further meetings that Dr. Gilpin, headmaster of the Halifax Grammar School should be appointed principal of the proposed high school.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ended October 31st, 1926. p 128.

In January, 1877 the trustees of the grammar school presented a draft bill in the House but this Act was revised on February 28th, 1877, as some of its provisions were thought to be objectionable. It was amended and finally passed on April 12th, 1877. At the session of parliament of 1877 the school board presented a bill entitled AN ACT FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF A HIGH SCHOOL AND FOR OTHER EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN THE CITY OF HALIFAX.

This bill was passed by the Council and read as follows.

AN ACT FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF A HIGH SCHOOL AND FOR OTHER EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN THE CITY OF HALIFAX.

Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and Assembly, as follows:

1. All the rights, powers and privileges conferred upon the Trustees of the Halifax Grammar School and their successors by Chapter 97 of the Acts of 1865, entitled "An Act for the appointment of new Trustees for the Halifax Grammar School", or by any other Act, are hereby transferred to and vested in the Commissioners of Schools for the City of Halifax and their successors in office and all the property, real and personal now held or owned by the Trustees of the Halifax Grammar School, shall be held and owned by such Commissioners of Schools for the purpose of aiding to establish and maintain a High School in the City of Halifax. For that purpose the commissioners shall have power to sell or lease and convey the real estate now held or owned by the Trustees.

2. Any sums beyond the net proceeds of the fees hereinafter mentioned which shall be necessary for the establishing and proper and efficient maintenance and working of such High School, shall be raised in the same manner and from the same sources respectively, as the sums required for establishing, maintaining and working the Public Common Schools in the City of Halifax aforesaid.

3. The Commissioners of Schools shall be entitled to receive and expend on account of such High School all grants and revenues from the Provincial Treasury or elsewhere heretofore received by or payable to the Trustees of the Halifax Grammar School.

4. There shall be annually admitted to all the privileges of the School free of charge in all twenty boys to be selected from the Common Schools of the City of Halifax after competitive examination in the subjects of an English education, to be defined by the Commissioners. Each competitive examination shall embrace pupils from the male schools in the City or from any one or more of them as may be deemed desirable by the Commissioners.

5. The Board shall have power to fix a standard without attaining which no pupil will be admitted to the High School. During the first year of the existence of the High School, the Commissioners shall have power, if they deem it expedient to increase the number of pupils to be admitted free of charge to any number, not exceeding thirty.

6. Payment of a yearly fee to be fixed by the Board and not to exceed Forty Dollars shall entitle any boy domiciled within the City of Halifax over ten years of age and having the necessary educational qualifications, to the privileges of the School during good behaviour provided there be in the School accomodation for such boy and provided that the Commissioners shall not be obliged to retain any pupil, -paying or free, -in the School for a longer term than five years.

7. The Commissioners shall have power to make and from time to time repeal, add to and amend all such by-laws and regulations not inconsistent with this Act or the laws in force in this Province, as they may deem necessary or expedient for the proper conducting of the High School, which by-laws, when approved by the Governor and Council, shall have the force of law.

8. In all matters not otherwise provided for by this Act or by by-laws or regulations under the next preceeding section the High School hereby provided for shall be subject to the provision of the law relating to public schools in this Province and to the regulations of the Council of Public Instruction regarding such schools.

9. In the event of any member of the Board of Commissioners of Schools for the City of Halifax taking advantage of insolvent debtors, being convicted of any criminal offence, or ceasing to have his domicile in this Province, his seat shall at once become vacant. Notice of such vacancy shall forthwith be transmitted by the Secretary of the Board to the body or authority by whom such member shall have been appointed and such body or authority shall as soon as conveniently may be, appoint a Commissioner to take the place of the Commissioner causing such vacancy and to hold office during his unexpired term.

10. The Commissioners of Schools for the City of Halifax shall not be obliged to receive into any school under their care any child under the age of six years.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee on School Sites and Buildings was urged by the board to procure a suitable temporary accomodation for three departments until permanent accomodation could be acquired. This committee recommended that (May 23rd, 1877) the premises on the corner of Barrington and Salter Streets known as the Old Freemasons' Hall be "hired" for one year from June 1st. This was done.

The first entrance examinations for admission to the High School were written August 20th, 1877. The purpose of this examination was to procure a certain number of pupils who were to be admitted free of charge providing their marks were high enough. Four days later

a second set of examinations were presented but this time for paying pupils. As a result of the first set of examinations thirty two pupils were granted free scholarships. There were a total of ninety-seven pupils admitted to the school for the first term thus it is to be presumed that there were a total of sixty-five paying pupils during the first term, at an annual fee of forty dollars.

Accordingly, after transferring books and supplies from Morris Street School the new Halifax High School opened at 9:30 a.m. September 1st, 1877.

#### The High School Building

The Board of School Commissioners, at a meeting in October 1877 appointed a committee to negotiate with the City Council and the Governors of Dalhousie College for a piece of property on the Grand Parade south of George Street upon which a permanent building might be constructed. This building was to be the home of the high school as well as the offices of the Board of School Commissioners. The Freemasons' Hall would have been unsatisfactory as a school for more than two years because of its extreme age and improper design.

The committee, however, found that it could not

recommend the Board to enter any negotiations with the City Council nor the Governors of Dalhousie College respecting the south end of the Grand Parade as a site for the high school.

At a meeting of the committee on School Sites and Buildings November 17, 1877 it was proposed that a site for the High School be procured on Brunswick Street between Sackville Street on the south and Hurd's Lane on the north. At a later meeting it was agreed that a piece of property on Brunswick and Albermarle Streets, facing on Sackville Street, be purchased as a site for the high school, if it could be procured for a sum not exceeding \$7,500.00.<sup>3</sup>

The Board minutes of December 12, 1877, describe a property 112'6" on Brunswick Street, 135' on Sackville, 35' on Albermarle Street and add:

"The Committee in recommending the purchase of this property has been influenced by the following consideration. The site is as far south as it could be without causing dissatisfaction to the residents of the northern portions of the city, while a point much further north would be distasteful to the people of the south end. The

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This sum was stated in the minutes of the board which are not available to the public but has been quoted in the Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ended October 31st, 1926. p 133

site appealed to the committee as being accessible from all directions,- "the Brunswick St. facing the Glacis of the Citadel will always remain open, guaranteeing a supply of pure air and a pleasant outlook to the pupils". The buildings on Sackville St. are low and will not shut off the sunshine which will fall on the building all day long. The drainage is excellent. The slope of the Citadel will afford room for recreation during recess. The site is cheap. The offices of the Board can be located in this building, thus saving \$400.00 a year".

"As the building will be completely isolated the risk of fire will be small, the rate of insurance correspondingly low".<sup>4</sup>

Plans of the High School property were submitted.

A delay in the proceedings occurred as a result of faulty title of one portion of it. At one point the Board considered dropping completely this site in favour of a site on Spring Garden Road. However, the difficulty was adjusted and the purchase was completed.

On May 1, 1878, Henry Busch, Architect offered to furnish and superintend detailed plans for the new High School Building at 4% on cost. Later the Board made him an offer of one thousand dollars for detailed plans and specifications and superintending the erection according to specification. Robert Brinton was awarded

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Report of Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for two years ending 31st, October 1926. p 133.



the contract for building the High School and the contract was ordered executed.

The new building was regarded as a milestone in the development of the City of Halifax. The opening was attended by many dignitaries including Wilfred Laurier. Flags were draped over the windows of the building and a large crowd witnessed the opening. The Morning Chronicle published the following editorial.

"The opening of the new High School building, yesterday marks a long stride in the educational progress of the city. We have had a High School nominally, for a year, but, without meaning to disparage its work we may truly say that the institution has attracted little notice because nobody cared to boast of a High School that was located in a tumble down structure which like many other ruins, must be admired for its venerable age, there being nothing else to admire in it. But now we have a High School of which Halifax may feel proud, a noble building, beautiful in design, admirable in arrangement and filled with all that is needed to make it adapted to its purpose. Of the importance of the High School we need say nothing. Its mission is well described in the address of Dr. Allison, which we print in a report of the opening proceedings. It is a good omen that the splendid structure, one of the largest and most substantial in the city has been completed without an accident of any kind and that everything connected with its erection, has passed off in the most satisfactory manner, architect, contractor, subcontractors, and workmen, all uniting in perfect harmony to make the building what it is, an ornament and a credit to our city".<sup>5</sup>

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The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, January 8, 1879.

The building was constructed of brick and granite with the main entrances on Sackville and Brunswick Streets. The basement was constructed of split granite. It was eighty four feet long on Brunswick Street and seventy four feet long on Sackville Street.

In the basement of the building was the School Board room, secretary's and supervisor's offices, store keeper's rooms and a large play room on the Brunswick Street side seventy eight feet by twenty seven feet which was to be fitted up as a gymnasium.

The first floor consisted of four class rooms, thirty two feet by twenty seven feet, the principal's private room, which communicated to all parts of the building by speaking tubes. There were also cloak rooms and lobbies. On the second floor the class rooms were of the same size as those on the first floor and were four in number together with hat and cloak rooms. In the main hall is the teachers' private room and the laboratory. The laboratory is deserving of more than a passing notice. It was finished with an inlaid flagstone floor and shelves of slate on brick foundations. Furnaces and all the necessary fittings were there. The chemical class room communicated with the laboratory by

a large door, sliding upwards back of the teacher's platform. Thus the teacher could have his illustrations always at hand and the class rooms kept free of litter.

The whole of the third floor consisted of an enormous lecture room with two ante - rooms. This room was one of the largest and handsomest halls in the city at the time.

The class rooms were finished with base boards of polished wood and had black boards running around three sides of the room. The building was heated with hot water supplied by a large boiler and furnace in the basement. The heating apparatus was one of the most complete and probably the largest in the city at the time.

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This information was common knowledge at the time and the account given here is a paraphrase of a write - up in the Morning Chronicle of January 8th, 1879. p 1.

## CHAPTER II

### ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS AND COURSE OF STUDIES

Pupils could enter the high school under one of two categories. They could enter either as honour pupils in which case they received free scholarship for a period of five years or they could enter as paying pupils. In order to enter the school they were obliged to write entrance examinations in which they were to maintain a specified general average which changed from time to time throughout the life of the school. At all times the requirements for admission as an honour scholar were greater than those for the paying pupil.

In 1877 the average requirements for admission for free scholarship was a general average of 65% or upwards and for admission as a paying pupil a general average of 40%. This changed slightly in 1878 when the paying pupil was required to maintain a general average of 50% and not less than 40% in any one subject. In 1879 the average requirements were as they had been the previous year but, in this year two courses were granted, a classical and a regular course. The entrance requirements for both regular and classical course were the same, a general average of no less than 40% with no mark below 25%.

The entrance examinations for those who wished to be admitted as non-paying pupils and for all who wished to take the regular course were the same.

In 1880 the requirements for entrance as paying pupils remained the same as the previous year but a change in the requirements for those wishing free scholarship was effected insofar as pupils in that year were required to maintain a general average of 65% instead of the regular 70%. In that year thirty-four pupils were admitted on scholarship while twenty-nine were entered as paying pupils.

In 1881 the percentage requirements for entrance remained as they were in 1880. In that year a total of twenty-three pupils were entered as free scholars while twenty-one were admitted as paying pupils. In this year, a supplementary regulation was added. Pupils were entitled to receive an extra 3% to their general average for excellence in writing.

The general average requirements in 1882 were as they had been in 1880 and 1881. In that year twenty-five pupils entered as free scholars while eighteen entered as paying pupils. In 1883 the requirements were as they had been in 1880, 1881, and 1882.

In 1884 a new regulation was applied to pupils of

honour level. If their marks in the reading entrance examinations were 95%, 85% or 75% they were to receive an additional 3%, 2% or 1% respectively to their general average percentage made in the written examinations. In this year also, the Halifax High School dropped Latin as a compulsory subject. Pupils could now apply for entrance as free scholars and if their marks averaged 60% or better with no mark below 30% in any subject they would receive free tuition for a period not exceeding five years. If, however, they failed to maintain this average, they were entitled to enter as paying pupils providing their general average was at least 35% with no mark below 20%. Pupils could also enter, at this time, the second year of the high school course if they passed, together with their regular entrance examinations, an examination in either Latin, bookkeeping or mathematics.

That the Halifax High School was not a free institution was causing considerable difficulty. This was apparent to the board at the time. Under the situation in the school, pupils who could not maintain a rather excessively high average on their entrance examinations were barred admission as free scholars and charged \$40.00 per year. At the same time, by not being a completely free school, it was ineligible to participate

in provincial grants being received by similar institutions in the province elsewhere with the result that the citizens of Halifax were losing large sums of money annually. This amounted to approximately \$1,300.00 per year.

On November 1st, 1885 the Halifax High School went out of existence. This event is significant for it meant that secondary education in Halifax could be obtained free of charge to any pupil passing required entrance examinations. The school had now become the Halifax Academy.

Although records of early entrance examinations for the Halifax High School are sketchy, it is known that the first set of entrance examinations were of an easy nature and that a large percentage of those attempting them succeeded in gaining admission to the school.<sup>1</sup> These examinations were written on July 16th and August 24th, 1877.

On August 22nd of the same year an examination for honour scholarships was written. In this examination, questions were set on the following subjects; algebra,

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<sup>1</sup>  
This information is derived from the Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ending October 31st, 1877, p 20.

arithmetic, geometry, history, English grammar, geography, English spelling and English composition. The examinations in July, 1878 were based on the same subjects as in 1877. In 1878 the fourth set of entrance examinations were written on December 21st and 23rd. In this year the pupils were required to have a knowledge of Latin in addition to those subjects laid down in 1877. The reason why this did not occur previously is that when the high school was first established the school board deemed it unnecessary to continue Latin in the common schools as a compulsory subject. This resulted in pupils beginning Latin in the high school, which also included grade nine. The supervisor and several teachers were of the opinion that this was an unfortunate mistake with the result that the teaching of Latin in the common schools was resumed the following year.

On July 16th, 1879 an examination for honour scholarships and for admission as paying pupils was held and in this year, the Board of School Commissioners published a complete set of examination rules in their annual reports, for the first time. These rules were as follows.



\*For candidates for free scholarship, and for those who do not propose to follow the Classical Course.

- 1st History of Nova Scotia and Outlines of English History.
- 2nd To write in a fair hand and correctly spelled, a short essay on any simple subject selected by the examiners.
- 3rd The ordinary rules of Arithmetic, Vulgar and Decimal Fractions, Proportions, Extraction of the square root, Interest, Discount, Profit and Loss.
- 4th English Grammar, including parsing and analysis.
- 5th A fair knowledge of the Geography of the Dominion, and outlines of general Geography.
- 6th Algebra to the end of Fractions.
- 7th The first Book of Euclid.

For boys intending to take the Regular or Classical course. (Paying).

- 1.- History of Nova Scotia and Outlines of English History to the Battle of "Bosworth Field".
- 2.- Writing from dictation - spelling to be correct and handwriting fair.
- 3.- A fair knowledge of Elementary English Grammar, including the parsing of easy sentences.
- 4.- The ordinary rules of Arithmetic, Vulgar and Decimal Fractions, Simple Proportion and Interest.
- 5.- Outlines of General Geography, with a more particular knowledge of that of Nova Scotia.
- 6.- The first twenty-five propositions of the First Book of Euclid<sup>2</sup>.

This system of regulations and entrance requirements of 1879 remained in effect without any change for

the years 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1883. In 1884 a new set of regulations for admission to the school was published in the Halifax City School Reports and were as follows.

\*1. For Candidates for Honor Scholarships.

1. Reading, with distinctness and expression, any passage selected from the Fifth Royal Reader.
2. Writing, with due regard to neatness and legibility.
3. Spelling.
4. English Grammar, including Definitions of Terms, Rules of Inflection and Syntax, Parsing and analysis of simple sentences.
5. Geography - General Geography of the Grand Divisions of the Earth, and a thorough acquaintance with the Geography of the Dominion of Canada as contained in Calkin's General Geography.
6. Arithmetic - Kirkland and Scott's Elementary Arithmetic including the Examination Papers.
7. Algebra - Definitions and Fundamental Rules, as contained in Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners, to page 41.
8. Geometry - Hamblin Smith's Geometry, Book I, Section I.

Candidates desiring to enter the second year of the High School Course may do so on passing an examination in any one of the following optional subjects:-

- (1) Latin-Principia Latina to the end of the 33rd exercise.
- (2) Book Keeping - Single and Double Entry.
- (3) Mathematics - Eaton's Mathematics, Chapters I to II\*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid, p 24.

## "II For Paying Pupils

1. Reading, with distinctness and expression, any passage selected from the Fourth Royal Reader.
2. Writing with due regard to neatness and legibility.
3. Spelling.
4. English Grammar including Definitions of terms, Rules of Inflection, Parsing and Analysis of Simple Sentences.
5. Geography - Calkin's Introductory Text Book.
6. History - Calkin's History of British America, to the end of chapter 16. Collier's Brief History of British America to the end of the House of Anjou.
7. Arithmetic - Kirkland and Scott's Elementary Arithmetic, to the end of Chapter VI".<sup>4</sup>

In 1885, the Halifax High School became the Halifax Academy with the result that there were no longer any paying pupils. The entrance requirements for those who entered the Academy in 1885 were the same as those for free scholarship in 1884.

## Course of Studies

Unfortunately, there are no complete records of the course of studies in the Halifax High School. The masters of the school set up their own course of studies and followed them at a rate which they felt would be most beneficial to the pupils at the time. This autonomous

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Report of Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ending 31st October, 1884.  
pp 50-51.

nature of the high school has made it extremely difficult to plot the curriculum of the school but not impossible, for the records of the Board of School Commissioners show the number of pupils in the school taking various subjects in any one year.

Prior to 1885, the ideals which dominated the high school were the entrance requirements of the universities and the prescriptions for the different teachers' licences. These two ideals were the bases upon which the Halifax High School had been established.

The curriculum followed by the Halifax High School from 1877 to 1884 was based upon the requirements of those pupils who intended to enter the teaching profession or the university.

The Department of Education required that all teachers be familiar with the laws of the province of Nova Scotia which applied to education and with the regulations of the Council of Public Instruction, especially those portions bearing on the office of the teacher. They should know how to organize a school, how to arrange its courses, maintain order and discipline, and provide for physical health and comfort of the pupils. A teacher should be able to read English prose and verse with good taste and expression; also

to understand and be able to practice the phonetic method of teaching reading to beginners, that is, by commencing with the sounds and powers of the letters instead of their names. Spelling was of extreme importance and the teacher was required to know the correct spelling of all words in English which were in common use at the time. The Department also required that teachers be able to write neatly and fluently and to understand the principles of penmanship as given in the prescribed series of copy books.

Before entering the teaching profession an applicant was required to answer in writing, a series of questions. Each examination was different and each licence applied for required different questions. For example, the teacher applying for a grade "E" licence would be required to answer a paper which was more elementary than the paper for a "D" licence and so on.

The examination for Grade "E" teachers occupied one day. In these examinations the applicants were to be able to answer elementary questions on the classification and inflection of words, to be able to parse easy sentences and to give the rules of syntax applicable thereto. They were to be acquainted with the History of Nova Scotia and the Geography of Nova Scotia as well

as the main facts of General Geography particularly as regards North America and Europe. In Arithmetic they were to know the tables of money, weights and measures, and to be able to apply them in the solution of problems in Commercial Arithmetic. They must be able to work rapidly and accurately any simple question in addition, subtraction, multiplication or division of numbers including both vulgar and decimal fractions; also reduction. They were supposed to be familiar with the use of the Ball-frame in illustrating fundamental rules of arithmetic.

The examination for the applicants for a Grade "D" certificate, being longer and more difficult required one and one-half days to answer. The teaching applicant on this level was required to have a thorough knowledge of the classification and inflection of words and to be able to analyze and parse any simple sentence giving the rules of syntax applicable thereto. They were to be able to correct examples of the wrong use of words and to be able to write an original composition on a subject to be named in the examination itself. They were to be familiar with the history of Great Britain as well as with that of Nova Scotia, to be able to draw from memory an outline map of Nova Scotia and to be familiar with the physical and political geography of British America.

They were to have a fair knowledge of general geography and to understand the use of the terrestrial globe sufficiently to illustrate thereby the succession of day and night and of the seasons. They were also required to know the tables of sterling and French monies and to be able to solve readily and correctly any question in the arithmetical rules and interest. In algebra they were to understand the solution of simple equations involving one unknown quantity.

The examination for the Grade "C" teachers occupied a period of two days. These applicants were required to analyze and parse any simple or compound sentence, giving the rules of syntax applicable thereto and to be familiar with the principles of analysis and the terms used. They were to be able to recognize and define the principle figures of speech, to know the chief rules of the structure of sentences and the use of punctuation marks and to be able to apply any rules of grammar and composition to anything they wrote. The applicants were to understand the metrical structure of English verse, and to be able to scan examples in Iambic, Trochaic, Anapestic, and Dactylic measure.

The requirements in history were similar to those of Grade "D" but in greater detail. In geography,

they were to be able to draw from memory an outline map of England or of any of the continents, showing the chief rivers, mountains, bays and cities. They were to have full knowledge of general geography and to understand the uses of the terrestrial globe.

In arithmetic they were required to know all that was expected of the Grade "D" applicants but in greater detail and they were to demonstrate the correctness of given rules of arithmetic. They were to be able to solve any problem involving simple equations and to know all the first book of Euclid. They were to understand fully, the use of the Ball-Frame, to have carefully studied the best method of giving instruction in the several leading branches required to be taught in common schools and to be familiar with Macadam's Chemistry of Common Things.

For Grade "B" applicants the examination was to be written in two and one half days. They were required to have a full understanding of analysis and to be able to parse any sentence. They were to be familiar with the rules of syntax and analysis and to be able to apply them to any given sentence. In composition, they were to be able to write as in Grade "C" but with a greater strictness in the application. These students were also



required to explain any of the terms used in prosody.

The Grade "B" applicants were to be familiar with the history of British America and Great Britain and the outlines of Universal History. Since there was no satisfactory text book on the history of British America, the examinations were restricted to the history of Nova Scotia instead. The requirements in geography were the same for this class of applicant as for the Grade "C" group. The field of mathematics was broken down into arithmetic, algebra, geometry and practical mathematics. In arithmetic the students were expected to answer any fair question and to give the rules for any arithmetical process and to demonstrate the truth of such rules. They were to understand the principles of algebra, relating to simple and quadratic equations, and the solutions to problems giving rise to such equations. In geometry they were required to know the first four books of Euclid or an equivalent. These applicants were also to be familiar with oblique and right angled trigonometry, the mensuration of surfaces and the more simple solids. A good knowledge of the principles of navigation was also necessary.

In every case where the requirements are stated to be the same in different grades, it is to be understood

that the demands of the examination were more strict in the higher than in the lower grades.

The candidates for a Grade "A" licence wrote exactly the same papers as the candidates for the Grade "B" licence with the exception that a more scholarly approach was expected from the former. The additional requirements for an "A" class licence were in the nature of classical and scientific studies.

In the languages, the applicants were required to know and to translate the first three books of Caesar's De Bello Gallico; Horace's Odes, Book I, and Ars Poetica. They were to be able to translate Virgil's Aeneid, Books I, II, and III; Livy's History, Book I; Cicero's De Amicitia; Tacitus' Agricola. They were required to translate the first three books of Xenophon's Anabasis and Memorabilia; Homer's Iliad, Books I, II, and III; Euripides' Alcestis. They were also required to answer questions in Latin and Greek prosody, and to scan with correctness and expedition passages in Virgil, Horace and Homer. They were to translate English into Latin and Greek.

In the field of history they were to have a good knowledge of Grecian and Roman history including the ancient geography of Greece and Italy. In mathematics

they were to have two additional books of Euclid and to have a good working knowledge of spherical and solid geometry.

These applicants were also required to study physiology. They were to know the leading features of animal and vegetable physiology and they were required to have some knowledge of inorganic chemistry.

The colleges and universities placed demands upon applicants which show a marked similarity to the requirements of the Department of Education. Dalhousie College in 1877 and in the following eight years required entrance examinations which tested the students' knowledge in the following subjects.

In Latin the pupils were expected to know one book of Caesar, one book of Virgil, two orations of Cicero, and Horace, one book of Odes. In Greek they were to be familiar with one book of Xenophon, one book of Homer, Lucian's Select Dialogues, selected parts of the New Testament and one Gospel.

The students were to be prepared to write an arithmetic examination showing a good knowledge of that subject and to be familiar with the first book of Euclid's Elements of Geometry. In algebra they were to be able to state the simple rules and work simple equations of

one unknown quantity not involving surds.

The pupils were to have a working knowledge of English grammar, the history of England and its geography. Special stress was laid upon accuracy in Latin and Greek grammar.

In some cases pupils could enter the colleges as second year students. In this case their subject matter was similar to that for pupils entering as first year students but with greater detail in each subject.<sup>5</sup>

In 1877 the following subjects were taught in the Halifax High School; reading, recitation, spelling, dictation, general geography, fine hand writing, mental arithmetic, slate arithmetic, English grammar, analysis, British history, composition, Latin, Greek, algebra, geometry, French and German. In the following year mental arithmetic was not taught, but the chemistry of common things and ancient history were added to the course.

In 1879 universal history was added, but the chemistry of common things was dropped. In 1880 mental and slate arithmetic were taken as one subject. Previous to this time a pupil would have been able to take one

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<sup>5</sup> This information was collected from the Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ended October 31st, 1877. p 24.

without the other but this procedure came to an end in this year. In this same year universal history was dropped and was not taught again in the high school. The chemistry of common things was resumed in 1880 and remained on the curriculum from that time onward.

In the next year recitation, dictation and ancient history were dropped from the curriculum and were not taken up again during the existence of the Halifax High School but they were replaced to some extent by the addition of practical mathematics and British American history. This year also saw the addition of the geography of Nova Scotia. In 1882 the latter was not taught nor was British American history which was replaced by a course in Canadian history. A course in drawing was also added. In 1883 the course in drawing was not taught but natural philosophy and physiology were taught for the first time. In 1885 the course of studies of the Halifax High School was published in the reports of the Board of School Commissioners and was as follows.

## Course of Studies for High Schools

## First Year

\*1. English Language - (a) 6th Reader, Part I, with sketches of the authors of passages read, and recitations of choice selections.

(b) Dictation exercises, with special reference to words liable to be misspelled, use of prescribed speller, word-analysis with study of cognate derivatives.

(c) Grammar - Prescribed text-book completed except notes and appendix.

\*(d) Prescribed introductory text. Monthly essays or abstracts, with special attention paid to penmanship, punctuation, capitals, paragraphing, etc.

2. Geography- Europe and North America; Map Drawing.

3. History- Prescribed text in British History completed and reviewed; History of British America reviewed.

4. Arithmetic- Hamblin Smith, except sections 14, 22, 29, 32 and 33; examination papers to be omitted.

5. Geometry- First Book with easy exercises.

6. Algebra- Todhunter, through Fractions.

7. Industrial Drawing- Nos. 5 and 6 Text-books of Art Education.

Physics- (Winter Term) Prescribed Primer, with additional oral lessons and experiments based on Gages' Elements of Physics. (Ginn, Heath & Co., Boston.)

8. Botany- (Summer Term) The elements of structural Botany as in Gray's How Plants Grow, taught orally with systematic study of local Flora, (a minimum list of fifty common plants for analysis and classification is published in the Journal of Education.)

\*9. Latin - Principia Latina, part I, through Ch. 32, and Part II, to Roman History.

\*10. Book-Keeping.

\*11. French - Grammar, translation and composition as in French Principia, Part I.

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\* Only two of these imperative.<sup>6</sup>

### "Botanical Species

The following fifty common species (occurring in almost every school section of the Province) are named for analysis and classification in connection with the Botany of the first year of the High School Course. A description of the genera and orders in which these species are included should also be required. This list should be regarded as a minimum. Few teachers really interested in teaching science will find much difficulty in adding another fifty, which should include a few specimens of mosses, liverworts, lichens, fungi, and algae, as well as some additional phanerogams. This list will, of course, be revised from time to time.

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ranunculus repens       | 26. Mentha canadensis   |
| 2. Capsella bursa-pastoris | 27. Solanum tuberosum   |
| 3. Viola blanda            | 28. Syringa vulgaris    |
| 4. Drosera rotundifolia    | 29. Chenopodium album   |
| 5. Cerastium vulgatum      | 30. Polygonum aviculare |
| 6. Acer rubrum             | 31. Ulmus Americana     |
| 7. Trifolium repens        | 32. Fagus ferruginea    |
| 8. Prunus Pennsylvanica    | 33. Myrica gale         |

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9. <i>Fragaria Virginiana</i>      | 34. <i>Betula</i>                 |
| 10. <i>Pyrus malus</i>             | 35. <i>Populus tremuloides</i>    |
| 11. <i>Ribes nigrum</i>            | 36. <i>Pinus strobus</i>          |
| 12. <i>Epilobium angustifolium</i> | 37. <i>Abies Canadensis</i>       |
| 13. <i>Pastinaca stiva</i>         | 38. <i>Habenaria orcyripedium</i> |
| 14. <i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>       | 39. <i>Iris versicolor</i>        |
| 15. <i>Cornus Canadensis</i>       | 40. <i>Smilacina bifolia</i>      |
| 16. <i>Sambucus</i>                | 41. <i>Juncus effusus</i>         |
| 17. <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>    | 42. <i>Carex intumescens</i>      |
| 18. <i>Cirsium arvense</i>         | 43. <i>Triticum vulgare</i>       |
| 19. <i>Taraxacum dens-leonis</i>   | 44. <i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>   |
| 20. <i>Lobelia inflata</i>         | 45. <i>Pteris aquilina</i>        |
| 21. <i>Epigaea repens</i>          | 46. <i>Aspidium spinulosum</i>    |
| 22. <i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>   | 47. <i>Dicksonia punctilobula</i> |
| 23. <i>Plantago major</i>          | 48. <i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>     |
| 24. <i>Lystimachia stricta</i>     | 49. <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>     |
| 25. <i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>  | 50. <i>Lycopodium clavatum</i>    |

Where the genus alone is mentioned the teacher is supposed to select the species most available in the neighborhood. Some of these flowers are very minute, and their study will require the use of a cheap botanical lens. It is important that each student should own a lens, and be taught how to use it. Students should be exercised in drawing the small parts enlarged on the black boards and in their note books. As a specimen of the mosses recommended "The common Hair Cap", Polytrichum; of the Liverworts, Marchantia, of the Lichens, Usnia, Sticta or Gladonia; of the Fungi, Agaricus campestris, the "edible mushroom".<sup>7</sup>

#### Industrial Drawing for High School Course

1. For the first year, Nos. 5 and 6 of the American Text Book of Art Education. (Retail Price 15 cents each).
2. For the second year, Nos. 7 and 8 of the same series. (Retail price, 25 cents each).



The above books belong to the same series as those already used in our common schools. Nos. 5 and 6 are accompanied by a manual for teachers, giving full directions in regard to the use of the books. The retail price of this manual will not exceed 60 cents. A small manual accompanying Nos. 7 and 8 will be supplied gratuitously to teachers whose circumstances require them to use those books. It is not supposed that for the year about to begin many schools will require anything in advance of Nos. 5 and 6. As it has been thought well to omit No. 4 entirely from the Course of Study, the following hints are supplied:-

Before beginning work in No. 5, pupils should be taught to draw by freehand the following plane geometric figures, and these should be drawn or derived from the geometric solids, thus-

The Circle from the Sphere.  
 The Oblong from the Oblong Block.  
 The Right-angled triangle from the Square Prism.  
 The Isosceles Triangle from the Square Pyramid.  
 The Equilateral Triangle from the Equilateral triangular Prism.  
 The Ellipse from the Ellipsoid.  
 The Oval from the Ovoid Form.  
 The Hexagon from the Hexagonal Prism.  
 The Pentagon from the Pentagonal Prism.  
 The Octagon from the Octagonal Prism.

By deriving the plane geometric figures in this way, pupils will have a more definite conception of them than if drawn from flat copies or from black-board copies alone. As a rule, the shortest dimensions of each figure should be four inches.

For definitions in regard to these plane geometric figures consult pages 35 and 36 of the Manual, Part III, accompanying Drawing Book No. 5. The drawings should be made on Manilla paper and pupils should be practiced on rapid work. Where no previous instruction in Drawing has been received, attention should be paid to the holding of the pencil and the character of the line produced. The pencil should be one of medium softness.

(The above drawing-books can be obtained through Halifax book-sellers.)<sup>o</sup>

### Second Year

1. English Language - (a) 6th Reader, 2nd Part, with scansion of metrical passages, and converting poetry into plain prose. Sketches of authors &c., continued.

(For above requirement teachers are at liberty to substitute a critical study of Longfellow's Evangeline. The edition of poem recommended for pupils is that published in connection with "Blackie's School Classics", - retail price, twelve cents.

(b) As in first year.

(c) Grammar completed and reviewed, with special analysis of difficult passages.

(d) Dalgleish's advanced text in English Composition, with essays.

2. Geography Completed with special attention to Physical Geography.

3. History - Modern History as in Swinton's Outlines.

4. Arithmetic - Text - book completed and reviewed.

5. Geometry - First Book reviewed, with exercises complete. 2nd Book, with Miscellaneous Exercises.

6. Algebra - Involution, Evolution, Simple Equations.

\*7. Chemistry - Inorganic, (Winter Term) as in Steel's Fourteen Weeks in Chemistry.

Agricultural, (Summer Term), as in Prescribed Primer.

8. Book - Keeping.

9. Industrial Drawing - Nos. 7 and 8 American Text-Books of Art Education.
- \*10. Latin - Principia Latina, Part I, completed. Grammar and Caesar De Bell. Gall., Book VI.
- \*11. Greek, - Grammar, translation and composition, as in Initia Graeca, Part I.
- \*12. French, - Principa Part I reviewed and Part II.

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\*Only three of these imperative.

### Third Year

- \*1. English Literature, - Stopford Brooke's Primer of English Literature. Critical study of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. (The edition of the play recommended for pupils is that in the Royal School Series, with notes and glossary, by W. S. Dalglish. Retail Price twelve cents.) Exercises in parsing, analysis, and historical etymology in connection with book read.
2. Geography reviewed.
3. History, - Swinton's Outlines completed.
4. Arithmetic - Occasional problems.
5. Geometry, - to the end of Book IV, with exercises complete.
6. Algebra - Text-book completed.
- Physiology - (Winter Term) The elements of Physiology and Hygiene as in Huxley and Youmans, (to be taught orally.)
- \*7. Geology - (Summer Term). As in prescribed Primer, with special study of Geology and Mineralogy of Nova Scotia.

- \*8. Practical Mathematics - Prescribed Text-Book.
- \*9. Latin - Ovid's Metamorphoses - prescribed extracts. Caesar, Book VI, reviewed or Cicero Pro Archia Poeta. Principia Latina, Part IV., through Chapter 35.
- \*10. Greek - Grammar, and Xenophon Anabasis Books I and 2.
- \*11. French - Advanced Grammar, (Bracket or Otto) Charles XII. Moliere's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

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\*Only three of these imperative.

Note.- Changes in Latin, Greek, and English, authors read will be announced from year to year in the Journal of Education.<sup>9</sup>

It is important to note that up to 1884 no course of studies for the Halifax High School had ever been published in any form whatsoever. It appears as though the school followed a system similar to that mentioned but, since the actual course of studies and the teaching procedures were matters of concern of the school and not the Board of School Commissioners, no complete account exists today.

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<sup>9</sup>  
Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ended 31st October, 1885. p 55-60.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MASTERS AND THE SUBJECTS THEY TAUGHT

The study of Latin in the High School presented somewhat of a problem to the Board of School Commissioners. When the new school was opened the Board decided that it would no longer be necessary to teach Latin in the common schools of the city. The subject was to be taken up by all pupils upon entering the High School. This action proved to be very unpopular in two ways. Firstly it meant that the pupils of the new school had only three years of Latin and that it was difficult in this relatively short period of time to bring them up to the standards required by the colleges and the Department of Education. It also meant that all new pupils were forced to study a subject for which no practical outcome could be seen.

Mr. Alexander MacKay, Supervisor of Schools at this time, in a report to the Board, stated that it appeared to him that this situation was unreasonable and should be stopped. He felt that the pupils taking the classical course should have more time in their three year stay at the High School to study Latin and Greek; and to find this time, should be excused from English Composition, Grammar, Geography and perhaps English Literature and General History.

His argument was as follows:-

"With regard to the utility of the study of the Ancient Classics there exists here, as elsewhere, a great diversity of opinion. A very large majority of those who have enjoyed the advantage of a university education, and who therefore largely form public opinion on this subject, believe that breadth of culture and scholarship cannot be attained without a study of Latin and Greek. This mistake is quite natural, for we are apt to attach an undue value to what we know best. Such persons tacitly assume that the old system must be the system, because it produced them. On the other hand we are all the more apt, presumptuously, to undervalue those subjects of which we know nothing, and without which we have been successful. Many foolishly disclaim against the study of the classics as if it were a relic of the dark ages. But here, as in many other cases, in medio tutissimus ibis."<sup>1</sup>

From this time, Latin and Greek were carried in the high school as optional subjects.

In 1884, the school made a change in the department of modern languages due to the resignation of the French tutor, Mr. Liechti who had been with the school since its establishment in 1877. This man had been appointed to a professorship in Dalhousie College and was replaced on the staff of the high school by Mr. N. C. James, a graduate of the University of Toronto.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the city of Halifax for the year ended October 31st, 1884.  
p 23.

Professor Liechti had been engaged in the high school only three hours each day. There were usually four or five classes of about twenty pupils each. As French and German were both taught it is evident that time must have been inadequate, an injustice to both tutor and pupils.

No provision had ever been made for the systematic teaching of industrial drawing. Mr. James had the necessary qualifications to teach the latter as well as modern languages.

Mr. James saw that French in a country such as Canada is of great value both practically and educationally. Under his direction, 97 out of 98 students studied this subject. He gave as much time as possible to oral French and French conversation.

Mr. Waddell in the English Department of the high school spent much of his time trying to inspire in the pupils a desire for good reading and of giving them the power of forming definite, correct, and independent opinions on the merits of an author, both as to style and matter. This he did by a careful reading and a critical study of a few English Masterpieces, memorizing the choicest portions, and secondly, by such a survey of the field of literature as would enable his pupils to

select wisely for future reading.

"It is appalling to think of how many of our young people are clandestinely devouring the worse than worthless sensational literature of the day, an evil which is tending to sap the foundation of every class of society alike. How much time is spent by the greater number of teachers in merely teaching children to read, and how little in trying to make them love and enjoy good reading only, and yet no part of a teacher's work is more important to individual or to society".<sup>2</sup>

Mathematics, Bookkeeping and the Natural Sciences were taught by Mr. A. J. Denton. Mr. Denton was a graduate of Acadia College and it was with his arrival at the School that a course in Bookkeeping was initiated in 1884. The purpose of this course was to give the pupils some practical training which would help them in their employment.

In the Natural Sciences, Mr. Denton followed the principle that it was best for the individual in any study, to pursue the path by which mankind before him arrived at the conclusions which he seeks to establish, that a knowledge of the more obvious and general properties of matter should precede a knowledge of the more recondite qualities. By this means in natural and easy

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Mr. Alexander MacKay, Supervisor's Report, Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax, for the year ending October 31st, 1884. p 25.



gradation he proceeds from the study of masses to that of molecules, then of atoms, then of matter as associated with life; physics first; then chemistry; and lastly physiology, the most important.

The only Headmaster the High School ever had was Rev. Dr. Edwin Gilpin whose career as an educationalist in Halifax cannot be omitted. He was born at Aylesford, Nova Scotia in the year 1821, the son of Edwin and Eliza Gilpin. He was educated at Kings College, Windsor, receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1847, his Master of Arts Degree in 1850; Bachelor of Divinity in 1853 and his Doctor of Divinity in 1863.

Gilpin became headmaster of the Halifax Grammar School in the year 1848. He held this position until he was appointed headmaster of the Halifax High School in the year 1877. When the Halifax High School became the Halifax Academy he became its first principal. He saw forty-one years service in these three schools.

The board hired Gilpin in 1877 at an annual salary of \$1,600.00. This salary remained almost constant throughout his career at the high school with the exception of the years 1879, 1880, 1881 and 1882 when his salary was reduced to \$1,440.00 per year due to an economic depression at that time.

Discipline was very severe in Gilpin's time. To those pupils who were not inclined to learn, some small degree of knowledge was imparted by the use of the leather strap.

The headmaster arranged the pupils of the high school into four divisions, the first being generally composed of those who last entered the school. It, therefore embraced honor scholars who were well drilled in the public schools and who passed a difficult examination, and paying pupils who entered on a very much lower grade. From this diversity arose one of the most serious difficulties with which the masters had to contend. All pupils should have entered with the same scholastic attainments.

There were seven sessions of 40 or 45 minutes each, in a school day. There were also two recesses, one of 5 minutes at 10:20 a.m., and another of 10 minutes at 11:45 a.m. It was felt at that time that forty minutes of earnest and individual attention exhausts the energies of any pupil, and that a change of occupation is then profitable.

The time to be devoted to various subjects, the order in which they were taken up, and the amount of work to be done was mainly, if not wholly, decided by each

master for himself and, therefore, varied considerably from term to term. A freedom of this nature proved to be a serious defect and was later cleared up.

CHAPTER IV  
FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

The total expenditure by the Board of School Commissioners on the Halifax High School amounted to \$56,643.76 over a period of eight years from 1877 to 1885. Of this amount, \$33,733.98 was paid to the teachers as salaries. This amount represented 59½% of the total expenditure. Interest on bank loans and debentures amounted to a total of \$12,652.80 or 22¼% of the total cost. The remaining 18¼% was spent on the actual running of the school.

This money was derived from the following sources. The General School Account, the grammar school trust, pupils' fees and rents of buildings owned by the board. From the General School Account or public assessment, \$39,830.17 was received which amounted to 70% of the total. From the fees of the pupils a total amount of \$9,745.02 or 17% of the total. The remaining 13% was derived from the grammar school trust and rents from buildings which belonged to the board.

The Halifax High School cost the citizens an average of \$1,218.12 per year plus a tax of approximately \$4,978.77 per year. Following is a collection of statements of expenditures and receipts of the Halifax High School for all years ending October 31st

from 1877 to 1885 inclusive.

For the year ended October 31, 1877

Expenditures

Examiners	95.88
Teachers' Salaries	1866.67
Cleaning	181.05
Furniture	1039.10
Labor and Repairs	107.10
Fuel	100.80
Rent	175.00
Books and Stationery	95.79
Fire Insurance	10.00
	<u>\$3671.39</u>

Receipts

Fees from Scholars	920.00
Cash From General School Account	2500.00
Cash from Rev. Dr. Gilpin for rent	120.00
Cash from Provincial Government	200.00
	<u>\$3740.00</u>
Balance	\$68.61 <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>  
These tables are revised tables appearing in the Reports of the Board of School Commissioners for the years 1877 to 1885. Because of their extreme length and detailed account, they were revised for the purposes of this paper.

For the year ended October 31st, 1878.

Expenditures

Chemical Apparatus and Chemicals	634.01
Examiners	23.52
Teachers' Salaries	3600.00
Cleaning services	108.00
Rent, Old Mason's Hall	262.50
Stationery &c.	172.95
Glazing	24.68
Insurance on Furniture	3.64
Plumbing	71.84
J. B. Smithers, Locks &c.	9.15
Pipes and Screens	3.60
Repairs	108.03
Malcom and Johnston	3.25
Gas Company	1.46
Printing and Advertising	440.57
	<u>\$5466.99</u>

Receipts

Fees from High School Pupils	1500.00
Provincial Government (trust)	600.00
Rents from Spring Garden Road and Bishop St. properties.	267.04
Balance Chargeable to General School Account	3099.95
	<u>\$5466.99</u> 2

For the year ended October 31st, 1879.

Expenditures

Teachers' Salaries		4803.00
Cleaning		219.00
Rent		262.50
Interest on Loan from Bank	117.30	
Interest on Debentures	1839.15	
		1956.45
Fire Insurance on High School	69.54	
Fire Insurance on Property, Spring Garden Rd.	11.66	
Fire Insurance on Property, Bishop St.	7.66	
		88.66
Books and Stationery		93.21
Fuel		201.75
Advertising and Printing		86.56
Miscellaneous Accounts		453.58
		<u>\$8164.91</u>
Balance Due the Peoples' bank this date		3158.41
Expenditure per account this date		8164.91
Balance		1412.50
		<u>\$12735.82</u>

Receipts

Drawn from General Account	10643.32
Provincial Government Trust	600.00
Dr. Gilpin, Rent	240.00
Pupils' Fees, High School	1015.00
Rent for house on Bishop St.	237.50
	<u>\$12735.82</u> 3

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Paraphrased from Report of the Board of School  
 Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the month ending  
 October 31st, 1879. p 98.

For the year ended October 31st, 1880.

Expenditures

Teachers		4386.64
Cleaning		240.00
Interest on loan from Peoples' Bank	176.15	
Interest on Debentures	2110.50	
		2286.65
Fire Insurance on High School	70.08	
Fire Insurance on property, Spring Garden Rd.	10.24	
Fire Insurance on property, Bishop St.	6.40	
		86.72
Books and Stationery		26.11
Prizes		31.24
Furniture (Including Maps)		231.50
Advertising and Printing		65.70
Miscellaneous Accounts		141.67
		<u>\$7523.83</u>

Receipts

Balance on Hand		1412.50
Superintendent of Education, Grammar School Trust		600.00
Rent, House on Spring Garden Rd.		265.00
Rent, House on Bishop St.		190.00
Pupil Fees		950.00
Balance from City Assessment		4106.33
		<u>\$7523.83</u> 4



For the year ended October 31st, 1881.

Expenditures

Teachers		4230.00
Cleaning		240.00
Fire Insurance High School	52.01	
Fire Insurance Bishop St. Property	4.75	
Fire Insurance Spring Garden Rd. Property	7.60	64.36
Fuel		237.71
Miscellaneous Account and Casual Rep- airs		
High School Building	78.83	
Bishop Street Property	53.00	
Spring Garden Rd. Property	102.82	234.65
Books and Stationery		55.74
Prizes		27.17
Advertising and Printing		92.60
Interest on Debentures		<u>2080.35</u>
		\$7262.58

Receipts

Pupils Fees		1318.00
Provincial Government Grammar School Trust		600.00
Rents, Bishop Street Property	142.50	
Rents, Spring Garden Rd. Property	90.00	
Rents, Old Grammar School Bldg.	75.00	
		<u>257.50</u>
		\$2175.50
City Assessment		<u>5087.08</u>
		\$7262.58 5

For the year ended October 31st, 1882.

Expenditures

Teachers	4688.37
Cleaning	240.00
Fire Insurance	135.50
Water Rates	66.50
Fuel	349.71
Miscellaneous Accounts including repairs	214.02
Books and Stationery	27.58
Prizes	26.40
Advertising and Printing	39.10
Interest on Debentures	2140.50
	<u>\$7927.68</u>

Receipts

Pupils Fees	1490.84
Grammar School Trust	600.00
Rents	335.58
	<u>\$2426.42</u>

City Assessment	5501.26
	<u>\$7927.68</u> 6

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6  
Paraphrased from Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the city of Halifax for the year ended October 31st, 1882. p 95.

For the year ended October 31st, 1883.

Expenditures

Teachers	4925.89
Cleaning	250.00
Water Rates	50.00
Fuel	280.55
Miscellaneous Accounts including repairs	297.70
Books and Stationery	34.08
Prizes	22.49
	<u>\$5860.71</u>
Advertising and Printing	30.50
Interest on Debentures	2110.50
	<u>\$8001.71</u>

Receipts

Pupil Fees	1500.97
Grammar School Trust	600.00
Rents	414.50
	<u>\$2515.47</u>
City Assessment	5486.24
	<u>\$8001.71</u> 7

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7  
Paraphrased from Report of Board of School  
Commissioners for the City of Halifax for the year ended  
October 31st, 1883. p 85.

For the year ended October 31st, 1884.

Expenditures

Teachers	5233.41
Cleaning	264.00
Water Rates	135.00
Fuel	272.04
Miscellaneous accounts including repairs	350.86
Books and Stationery	35.55
Prizes	<u>26.63</u>
	\$6317.49
Advertising and Printing	226.83
Interest on debentures	<u>2080.35</u>
	\$8624.67

Receipts

Pupil Fees	1050.21
Grammar School Trust	600.00
Rents	372.50
Law Faculty, Dalhousie College	<u>37.50</u>
	\$2060.21
City Assessment	<u>6564.40</u>
	\$8624.67 8

It will be seen from the statements listed above that the Board of School Commissioners possessed three pieces of property. The property situated on Birmingham Street was the building in which the classes of the Halifax Grammar School had been held. The land on Spring Garden Road was connected to the Grammar School property and was the residence of the headmaster of the high school, Dr. Gilpin. The third piece of property was situated on Bishop Street and had been willed to the Board of School Commissioners by James Dechman. Its history is significant and interesting.

About the year 1787 the name of James Dechman was found to be connected with Mather's church as it was then known, a congregational denomination, many of whose adherents being United Empire Loyalists. Later this church merged with the Presbyterian denomination and was thereafter called St. Matthew's Church. Here during the first part of the nineteenth century another James Dechman was elder. That he was devoted to his church is easily understood by the various gifts he gave to it. His bass viol (or as they called it the "Kirk Fiddle") was willed to the congregation with certain restrictions as to the times of its being played upon. He willed his library, a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica, 8th

edition, to the school which he so anxiously desired to found.

By the will of James Dechman the second, made in the year 1850, the house and garden on Bishop Street were bequeathed in trust for purposes of founding a school to be established under the superintendence and charge of the Kirk session of St. Matthew's Church, to be used either as a normal or training school for the inculcation of principles of sound morality and religion as taught in the parochial schools of Scotland. He gave the dimensions of the property and appointed as trustees five men or the survivors and successors of them to raise a fund by voluntary subscription to fit up the house and premises, to engage teachers and to regulate their salaries, the fees of tuition and to prescribe the course of study so that the same be made as useful and beneficial to the whole community as was in the power of the devisees and their successors. The school was to remain under the supervision and care of the elders of the church and the proceeds of the school were not to be directed to any other use. He further directed that the house was to be kept in good repair and that it was to be insured against loss or damage by fire. He requested that the school be opened on the fifth day of January

each year (that being his birthday) or on the sixth if the fifth should fall on a Sunday. He further stipulated that if the majority of the members of the Kirk session so desired, they may sell the property and with the proceeds invest in another property which was to be used as directed for the property on Bishop Street.

Evidently it was not possible to obtain by voluntary subscription the necessary amount to organize and maintain such a school. It was found that the Kirk sessions carried out to the best advantage the donor's wishes, renting the house and garden and keeping strict account year by year of the investment for twenty odd<sup>8</sup> years.

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8  
Report of the Board of School Commissioners for  
the City of Halifax for the Year ended October 31st, 1926.  
pp 120-121.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The Halifax High School represents that point in the educational system of the city of Halifax at which secondary education ceased to be solely in the hands of private schools and became a public matter. The high school, itself was an interim school lasting only eight years but it was an experiment in education which should not be forgotten.

Many of the problems found in today's educational systems are not new. Those who have proposed a system of merit support, that is, free tuition to colleges and universities for those students who are financially unable to attend a university may find in this study a veritable illustration of such a system.

It will be seen that the High School stressed a study of the classics, a course which by today's standards would be considered advanced even in the universities and bordering on the impossible in the high schools. At the same time the high school saw the commencement of the modification of the classical curriculum and the insertion of more instrumental subjects, a procedure which has progressed steadily until today the curriculum would appear to be an inversion of that of the Halifax High



School with the classics subordinate.

The masters of the school possessed superior qualifications and their salaries were worthy of their positions. As far as may be ascertained from rents and prices at that time, Dr. Gilpin's salary by today's standard would be in the range of from \$14,000.00 to \$16,000.00 per year admittedly far above the salaries of his colleagues in the common schools.

The curriculum of the school was determined, to a very large extent by the curriculum and entrance requirements of the colleges and universities at that time, particularly Dalhousie college. This situation was modified considerably during the existence of the Halifax High School and has been altered considerably since.

By an act of the Legislature passed on April 24th, 1885 the Halifax High School became the Halifax Academy. The differences between these schools may be determined by the act which follows.

#### Chapter 51

An Act to amend chapter 39 of the Acts of 1870, entitled, An Act for the Establishing of a High School, and for other educational purposes, in the city of Halifax.

(Passed the 24th day of April, A.D., 1885.)

##### Section

1. High School to be a free public school.
2. Section 2, Cap. 39, Acts 1877, amended.
- Section 3 Sections 4, 5, 6 repealed; 7 amended.

Be it enacted by the Governor, Council, and Assembly as follows:

1. The High School established under the provisions of the Act hereby amended shall, after the passing of this Act, subject to the other conditions in the said Act prescribed, be open as a free public school to the children of both sexes of all parents domiciled in the County of Halifax and shall be governed by all such regulations as may from time to time be made by the Council of Public Instruction in relation to County Academies under the law of the Province relating to Public Instruction.

2. Section 2 of the said Act is amended by striking out the words "beyond the net proceeds of the fees hereinafter mentioned."

3. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of said Act are repealed and section seven is amended by inserting after the word "power" in the first line thereof, the following words: "to fix a standard without attaining which no pupil will be admitted to the High School".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>  
N.S. Laws 48 Vic. Cap. 51.

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