

The History of Annieville

Noah Driscoll

I moved to the Annieville area when I was five years old to attend Annieville Elementary school for my primary education. It seems like ages ago now that I'm in my senior year at Delview Secondary. I remember celebrating the school's hundredth anniversary, in 2008. It was then that I realised how old the community really was, and I was astounded to find that many of the original settlers' ancestors still live here to this day.

In 1808, Simon Fraser came from the east and explored the Fraser River, hence its name. In 1822, the Hudson's bay company arrived at the mouth of the Fraser, and was soon followed by a mass of European settlers in the 1850s. In 1870, one such group was travelling up the river in search of a place to call home, when they came upon a plot of land. They attempted to dock, but the water was too shallow near the banks. A passenger named Annie waded to the shore, and thus the land became to be known as Annieville. Delta recorded that in 1870, there were 27 land claims in the area, one of which being the first coastal cannery. The community of Annieville began in the late 1800s, in 1871 to be exact, when the Loggie and Co. salmon cannery was established, the first salmon cannery in the entirety of Canada. This was the inception of an immigration surge, as large groups of Norwegian and Finnish people began to call this new area their home, looking for work in these fishing establishments. The first home was built by Jacob Gunderson, in 1902. Fish fueled the growing community as families settled in, though many other job opportunities became abundant, such as farming of plants and the raising of mink to create fur products. All over you can still see signs of the old community, plots of land where the mink ranches were set up, and many historic buildings, such as the Trinity Lutheran Church, still standing tall on River Road.

Jacob Gunderson was also the man who originally lobbied for a school to be built in Annieville, and so it was. The original school was located on the same property as the Trinity Lutheran Church, and was built in 1907. The school consisted of a single classroom, with 22 desks, a table and chair for the teacher, and a pot-bellied stove. The first teacher's name was Ella Hoffard. She lived in New Westminster, and rowed across the Fraser River each day. When the river

froze over, she would either walk to the school or travel in a horse-drawn sleigh. The school had no electricity, and all light was supplied through the large windows around the room. All water was taken from a well, and there was an outhouse outside of the building. The area was finally outfitted with electric lighting in the 1930's, and in 1941, indoor toilets were installed. The fresh water was taken from a spring below the church called Annieville Water Works system.

In 1951, the Annieville school was the only one-room school still running in Delta, but because of the growing area, more children were attending, around 59 students. Classes had to be held in the basement of the church in order to make room. The growing community required more space to be made in the school, so plans were made to create a new Annieville school. It was finished in 1956, and the opening ceremony, in 1957, was attended by none other than Miss Ella Hoffard.

In 1963, the original one-room school was torn down, as it no longer had any use. However, the new school saw a huge growth in enrolment, requiring Delview Secondary to be built to support the need for a high school in the area. By the 1970's Annieville had become the largest elementary school in Delta, enrolling upwards of 700 students per year. In 1978, programs were set up in order to facilitate children with special needs, and these programs are still an integral part of the school today.

When I attended the ceremony celebrating the school's 100th anniversary, I was given the honour of meeting many former students of Annieville, from both the original one-room building and the current site. Generations of Annievillians were present. Today the community of Annieville can boast of having six generations living in the area, and five generations attending Annieville school.

Going to Annieville was an experience that taught me much about what kind of person I should be, and what I need to do to better myself. I made many friends that I still have today, and learned that kindness and tolerance makes the world a much easier place to live in. With the special needs program, I came to see not the disabilities they had, but who they were as people, and this has helped me to remember through my life that everyone is a person. This gave me a strong sense of equality and tolerance. All in all, going to Annieville Elementary was a wonderful experience, and an amazing one. Living in Annieville, a

community over a hundred years old, and learning about its heritage is an eye opening experience. Entire families that I know were raised here, through many generations, and can talk for hours about all the things that they've done in our little community. And someday, I hope to be able to tell stories like that too, about the place I grew up in.