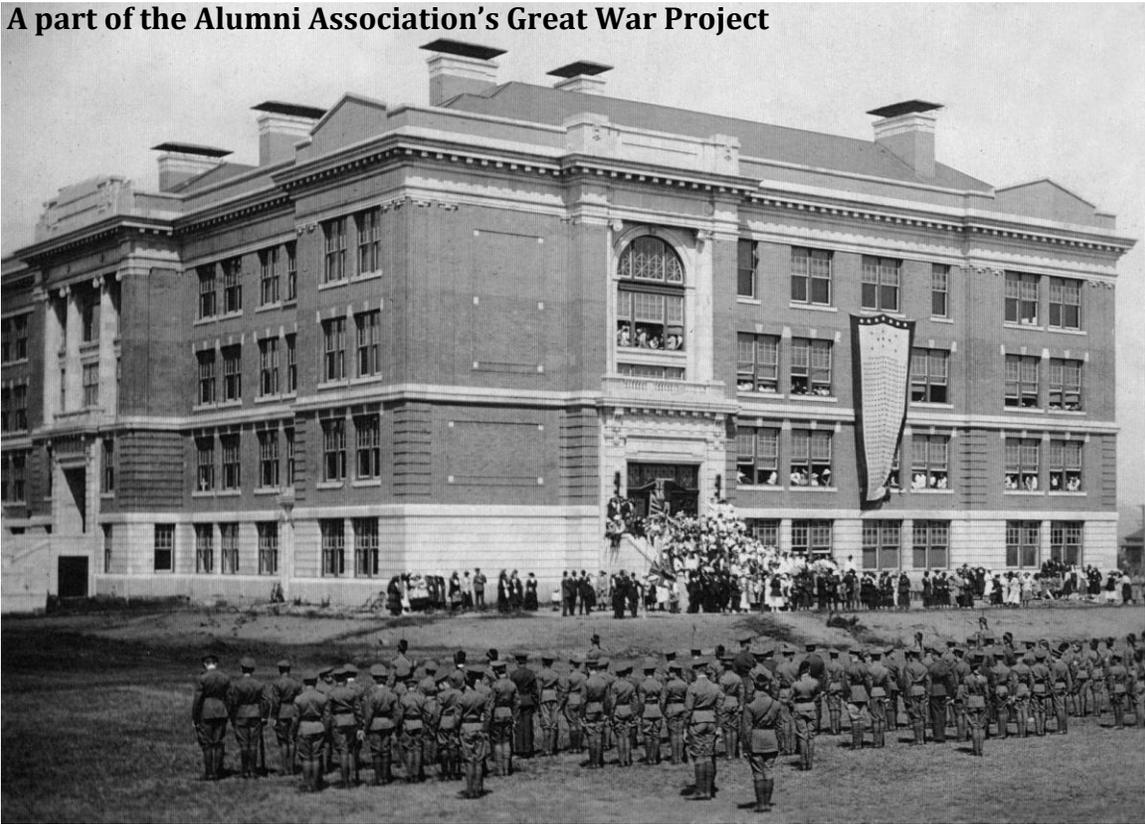


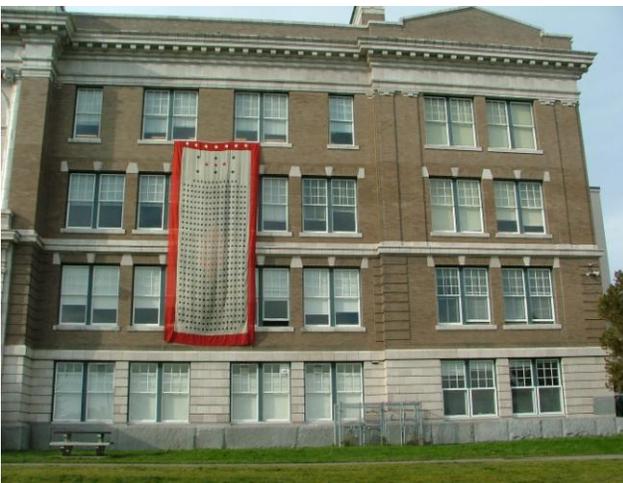
The Victoria High School Great War Banner

by Barry Gough

A part of the Alumni Association's Great War Project



The Victoria High School Great War Banner, which dates from Spring 1920, is made of linen flag cloth in colours red, white and blue. This striking banner is purposefully designed so as to hang from a window of the upper floor of the school on the east side, facing Fernwood Street above what we now call the grass hockey field. That field served additionally as the school's civic field, and perhaps as a parade ground for the Victoria High School Cadet Corps.



The Banner measures 10 feet 6 inches wide by 30 feet tall. A red border fringes it. The main field is white.

Along the top red border are ranged seven large white maple leaves, one each for the seven Nursing Sisters known to be connected with the school. Below these are represented the Teachers or, as they were known at the time, the Masters. They are denoted by nine large maple leaves in three rows: three blue in the top row, then three red, then three more blue. The red ones memorialize the three teachers who were casualties of the War. We can see that those who survived the War still flank their fallen colleagues and in effect hold them in their embrace. The arrangement is one showing corporate unity.



Beneath the teachers' maple leaves are those representing the Students, or more correctly members of the student body at one time connected to the school, some having been students before the War began. There are 53 red maple leaves and 397 white maple leaves. The 53 red maple leaves denote the casualties of War known at the date of the Banner's creation. The 397 white maple leaves are those who survived the War.

In fact, the 53 red maple leaves are arranged in the shape of an elongated shield. They are thus disposed in a similar fashion to the plaque of honour or shield on the brass Memorial Tablet in the school's main hall, where their names are listed. Likely the design of the banner can be credited to the teacher Mr. E. Clarke, who also designed the Memorial Tablet.

Thus we have the following totals: seven for the Nursing Students, all female, nine for the Teachers, three of whom were casualties of the War, and 450 for the Students, 53 of whom were casualties of the War and did not return. Thus the grand total of maple leaves, each representing an individual connected to the school, is 466. It should be noted that these are the known and recorded ones. There are bound to be some unaccounted for, lost to history. It is now impossible to know how many young male Students entered the Royal Navy or the Royal Canadian Navy or otherwise joined military units before the War and also served their King and Country.