

*Sigger-Francklin*

CRAIGFLOWER SCHOOL [1855]

*Admirals Road*

BUILDER: KENNETH MCKENZIE

Before McKenzie left England to organize Craigflower Farm, he had the foresight to concern himself with the education of the children of the future settlement. The company accordingly arranged for a schoolmaster, Mr Barr, to accompany the settlers in 1853. However, Barr was pressed into service by Sir James Douglas at the Fort, which up to that time had not had a teacher. In 1854 a second schoolmaster was retained, so Mr Charles Clarke was the first teacher at Craigflower School, finished in February, 1855 at a cost of \$4,300. The two storey structure consisted of one school room and six other rooms which were used by the teacher, his family, and the children from Colwood and Langford who boarded there. The school first opened on March 5, 1855 with an enrolment of eight boys and six girls.

The school was a significant step in the attempt to create a permanent colony on Vancouver Island. McKenzie, known locally as 'The Laird,' discovered limestone nearby and had a kiln constructed which eventually simplified construction methods. A sawmill, thresher, flour mill, bakery, slaughterhouse, blacksmith's shop, and ship chandlery were subsequently constructed, and by the end of 1854 twenty-one houses had been erected to house a population of seventy-six. The settlers had

The School House is a simple, provincial Georgian-style building with chimneys at either end of its rectangular plan. The timber for its construction was sawn at Craigflower mill and rafted across the Arm. From earliest times it sported a red roof and whitewashed clapboard siding. The small entrance porch on the west side was a later addition. Victoria was incorporated as a city in 1862 and the first Common School Act was passed by the Legislative assembly in 1865. In 1873 the Government spent \$1,125 on repairs—the last major renovations until the new Craigflower school was built in 1911. In 1925 the B.C. Historical Society started a campaign to save the school house, and in 1927 the Native Sons and Native Daughters of British Columbia leased the school with the intention of preserving it as an historic monument. In 1931 it was dedicated as a Museum and was operated as such until recently when it was confirmed as a National Historic Site. It is open to the public throughout the year.

