

A Brief History of the School

135 YEARS AGO, when our school began

In 1875 the first  motor-car had not yet been invented - that happened only in 1881!

The first telephone  wasn't invented until the following year, 1876, and it was many years before telephones were installed in homes.

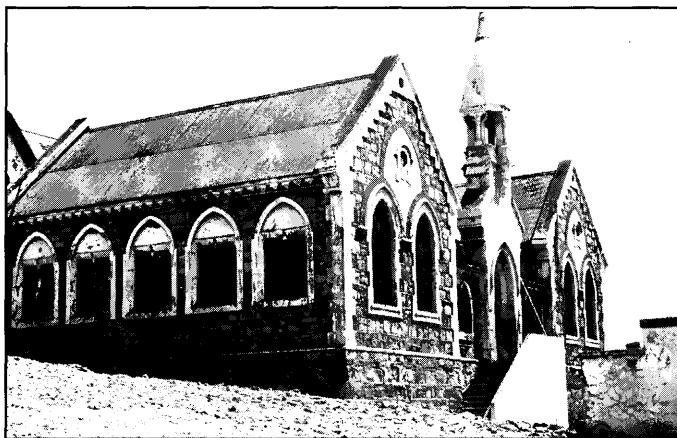
Home and streets did not have  electric lighting.

People did not have water in  their homes, they had to get it from a pump in the street!

BUT

On the **1st of October, 1875**, our school opened in a temporary building with just **13** pupils.

The principal was Mr G. Cassé. In **1878** the **South End Branch School** was built just off the old Walmer Road.



South End Branch School 1878

By 1882 when the Reverend G.T. Burbidge became headmaster the school had 137 pupils. Boys and girls were taught separately. The school was a branch of the Grey Institute. The Rector (Principal) of Grey used to come to inspect the school!

In 1902 **Mr F.G.B. Bollen** became headmaster. There were very few textbooks, so he wrote textbooks on Arithmetic, Geography and Reading. Prizegivings were held in the City Hall. In 1918 the school was closed for a whole term because of the  Spanish 'Flu Epidemic. In 1917 all schools were allowed to watch the first landing of an aeroplane in P.E.

On **30 May 1916** the foundation stone of a new school in Mitchell Street, South End was laid (where the Humewood Police Station is now). You can see the foundation Stone outside the front door of our school. On **17 March 1925** Mr Bollen died and in June **Mr S.F. Weller** was appointed as principal. He asked for school colours, and Silver Grey and Saxe Blue were chosen. Sport was introduced and electric light was installed in 1932. By 1938 there were 530 pupils in the school. That year all

60 children who passed Std. 6 (Grade 8) went on to High School. In those days you could leave school when you were 14 or in Std. 4 (Grade 6)!!

In **1939** **Mr S.G. Andrews** became principal. The school's name was changed to **South End Grey** and the motto "Honour and Service" was chosen. He applied for a new school to be built and when the 2nd World War was over the foundation stone of the new building (next to the newly-built high school) was laid on **12 September 1949**. The school was re-named Victoria Park Grey Primary and occupied in 1950. In 1954 the Std 6's were moved to the high school.



Victoria Park Grey 1950

In **1957** **Mr V.A.E. Cowley**, who had taught at the South End Public School from 1926 to 1938, came back as headmaster to this "new" school in a new area. When he retired he gave the principal's desk, which dated back to 1875 when the school began, to No. 7 Castle Hill. In 1966 Mr Heunis started teaching at V.P. Grey.

In **1968** **Mr L.A. van Dyk** was appointed headmaster. During his time he obtained additional land for the school which made it possible to build a netball court, tennis courts and cricket nets. A hall, the administration block, additional classrooms and a science laboratory were added and the media centre was built. The swimming pool was opened on **15 March 1975**, when the school was 100 years old! Ms Whitehead came back to V.P. Grey as a teacher in the same year. She was a pupil here from 1960 until 1964. Mrs Newman joined the staff in 1979.

In **1981** **Mr F. A. Emslie** took over as principal. He was responsible for instituting an annual Founders' Day celebration. Mrs Gouws started teaching here in 1985.

In **1987** **Mr L.E. Birkholtz** became principal in the fourth term. In 1989 the first edition of our annual magazine was published. He persuaded the Department of Education, which was then in Cape Town, to spend R500 000 on painting and repairing serious structural defects. Mrs Barnes began teaching here in 1990. In 1992 we were permitted to open our school to all races, which was very exciting, and Mr Amos Davids joined our maintenance staff.

At the end of **1994** **Mr D. Gouveia** was appointed as principal. During this time the Eastern Cape Department of Education was established in Bisho.

Mr P.M. Johnson took over the reins in **1997**. He realised that it was extremely important for our learners to