



William Aberhart, Principal 1915-1935

Any story about the fifty years of operation of Crescent Heights High School would be incomplete without some mention of the outstanding contributions of Mr. Aberhart. This is just a brief biographical sketch of this dynamic personality.

He was born on a farm near Searforth, Ontario, on December 30th, 1878. His father, William Aberhart S.r, had come to Canada from Germany at the age of seven years, while his mother, nee Miss Louisa Pepper, was an English woman. He attended Searforth School, Chatham Business College, and Hamilton Normal School (*ed. a teacher training college*). Later, he graduated from Queen's University, Kingston, with a B. A. degree, taking a considerable part of the work extra-murally.

Before coming to Calgary in 1910, he taught school at Wingham, Ontario, and was a School Principal at Brantford. In the meantime, he had married Miss Jessie Flatt of Galt. They had two daughters Mrs. James Cooper (Khona), Mrs. Charles McNutt (Ola), and four granddaughters. Mrs. Aberhart throughout her husband's life was acknowledged by him to be a constant source of support and inspiration. (*She last made her home in Calgary.*)

During his first five years in Calgary, he was a public school principal. In 1915, he transferred from King Edward to the principalship of the "North High School", which was then named Crescent Heights Collegiate Institute, first housed in the Balmoral School Building. Mr. Aberhart had many attributes, which helped him win success.

He was a person of high integrity and high ideals and won the esteem of all who met him. His jovial good nature and liking for a friendly argument enabled him to make contacts easily. He was a hard worker, starting each new project with great zeal, inspiring others with his enthusiasms. With his support, the Crescent Heights Parent-Teachers' Association became a large and very active organization and there was splendid co-operation between school and home.

Students, too, admired their principal. Former students recall him as always willing to listen to both sides of a story, and to encourage them to develop fully their varied talents. As a result of his exceptional organizing ability, Crescent Heights High School soon gained province-wide recognition for scholarship and became known in Calgary for its fine school spirit, its athletic prowess, and the high quality of its non-athletic activities.

Soon after moving to Calgary, Mr. Aberhart became widely known as a Prophetic Conference Bible Lecturer, and then a Radio Preacher. During the depression of the early 30's, it was his deep concern for the plight of his high school graduates and other young people which influenced him to adopt Social Credit theories as a solution for economic problems. In 1935, he led his party(ed. Alberta Social Credit League) to an overwhelming victory in the provincial election of August 22nd and became Premier, Attorney General, and Minister of Education.

During the eight years he served in the last mentioned capacity several much needed reforms were initiated. These included the setting up throughout the province of large administrative units. This raised the status of rural schools to equal that of those in urban areas. Legislation to give teachers professional standing, to establish pensions, and to transfer teacher training from Normal Schools to the University of Alberta was also effected. A person of less determination, capability, and courage would not have carried through these innovations in the face of the strong opposition he encountered.

20th Anniversary Presentations in 1935

(Note: Few realized at this school assembly, that the spring of 1935 would be Mr. Aberhart's last term at Crescent, since he had not yet won the government as Premier until later that summer)

On March 1st, 1935, the nine hundred students and teachers assembled in the Assembly Hall to do honor to our principal, Mr. William Aberhart and our Vice-Principal Mr. J. D. Ferguson on the twentieth year of their teaching at Crescent Heights. Nelson Partin represented the students, and Mr. J. Mahaffy the ex-students.

Nelson compared Mr. Aberhart and Mr. Ferguson to the skipper and first mate commanding the ship of "Crescent Heights" over the stormy seas of education.

Kay Kelly, representing the girls, wished them many more years of successful guidance and teaching at Crescent Heights.

Mr. Mahaffy praised Mr. Aberhart's sportsmanship and capabilities as an organizer. Mr. Ferguson served as a never-to-be-forgotten example of a keen, unruffled mind, which commanded the respect of all.

Nelson Partin then made a presentation to both Mr. Aberhart and Mr. Ferguson as a token of appreciation from the students and teachers.

Mr. Aberhart in reply expressed his pleasure and surprise. He traced the school's history from April, 1910. He asked the students to uphold the honor of the school. He hoped the school would go on winning laurels. He asked the students to be prepared to take their place in the new social order, which he hoped would soon arrive.

Mr. Ferguson expressed his embarrassment in a very witty manner. He referred to the early graduates of our school. He said that three of the present staff are graduates of this school. He referred to his first meeting with Mr. Aberhart and recalled many pleasant memories, "not the least of which," he said, "would be this afternoon."

The orchestra played two selections and a play was presented. The meeting closed with "The King."

I.S.C.F.—1947 RECOLLECTIONS at the 50th Anniversary

The activities of the *Inter-School Christian Fellowship* have been varied and interesting. Every Tuesday at noon a Discussion meeting has been held. Miss Giles lead the study on Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and Rev. W. Bonney conducted the study on Personal Evangelism.

In addition, a number of outside speakers have brought interesting messages to the Group. Two former Crescent students, Miss Doris Mileson, from the Dominican Republic, and Miss Ursula Burrows from India, have shown us Youth's responsibility in Missionary Enterprise. Miss Bessie Dodds, I.S.C.F. Staff Member, has given valuable help in every phase of our work. We are indebted to Mrs. George Kaiser for her leadership in Singing.

A progressive dinner party, skating party, Gym party and two House parties have contributed their share of fun and fellowship to our I.S.C.F. programme.

Presidents – Harvey Doyle & Eileen Wright
Secretaries – Harold Mortonsen & Doreen Watt

The I.C.S.F. has been a C.H.H.S. club for 22 years.