



Above: The students of The Parochial School (now St. Pat's) pose before the Memorial Day Parade outside the brand-new school building. This picture was taken around 1904 and Austin St. was just a dirt road.

Fun Facts about Saint Pat's

We were blessed that one of our alumni, James Munton, and his brothers wrote the history of Immaculate Conception Church and of St. Patrick School. James delivered the written materials to us last week. THANK YOU!!!! *Here are some fun facts you have to check out:*

- In its earliest days, St. Pat's was called "The Parochial School."
- The Parochial School was run by the Sisters of Mercy.
- In the early 1900's, St. Pat's had a reputation for having the finest of musical variety shows which were put on at The Music Hall on St. Patrick's Day. The place would be packed and "for late arrivers, it was impossible to find even six inches of standing space, except for in the corridors."
- In 1904, The Parochial School could not meet capacity for its 300 students so Fr. Finnegan led the effort to build our current school building and convent for \$45,000.
- In 1910, the school name was changed to "St. Patrick School."
- In 1915, **12** Sisters of Mercy taught **500** students at St. Pat's.
- The present Immaculate Conception Church was built in 1934.
- In 1951, an annex was built in the school parking lot to help with growing enrollment numbers—**St. Pat's had an enrollment of almost 700 students!** The new annex housed two classes each of 7th and 8th graders and housed 160 students (that's over 40 per class!). St. Pat's was the biggest elementary school in Portsmouth.

- In 1960, the students were invited to donate \$.10 for the Blessed Lady's Statue Fund (the statue in front of Immaculate Conception). The students who contributed had their names written on a scroll which was cemented into the base of the statue. Unfortunately, the original statue was vandalized in 1994 and a new one replaces it.
- In 1968, St. Pat's had it's own song! Check it out here.
- In 1983, they started Sunday night Bingo at Yoken's to help fundraise money for the budget. In just a few years, they raised \$87,000 and closed their deficit!
- In 1990, when Pease Airforce Base closed, St. Pat's enrollment took a hit—losing 1/3 of the students. This is when St. Pat's added an extended care program and a bus from York, Maine.
- St. Patrick School's Alumni list is said to read like a Who's Who of Portsmouth Leaders including names such as: Eileen Foley, former mayor, Attorney Peter Loughlin, Charles Griffin, Mary Keenan, John McMaster, and John O'Leary. These are just some of the city notables who graduated from St. Pat's.

Lyrics to the song which are sung to the tune of The Same Old Shillelagh:

The Century Song

Twas a hundred years ago sure'n they started old St. Pat's
 St. Mary's was it's name back then but Finnegan changed all that.
 The turn of the century saw the old school on its last
 But Finnegan then did he begin to satart all over again

Sure'n a brand new school building Patrick Finnegan he did build
 But this time he decided that the proper name he'd give
 Since Patrick was the greatest sure, then Patrick it would be
 So Patrick it's remained by gosh right down to you and me.

Sure it's the same old St. Patrick's
 That we've loved throughout the years
 From her we learned to love Our God and serve our neighbor, too.
 Our country's good, to serve it well, you've made us realize
 And so St. Pat's you've taught us well, our hats are off to you.