

History of Mitford

The site of the school has some interesting history from which gives the name Mitford. In 1886, T.B.H. Cochrane, son of Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane of England, and his wife, Lady Adela Cochrane decided to go into the lumbering business and selected the present site of the school to set up their sawmill. By July, 1885 the mill was operational and a town had started to grow. The town site received its name, Mitford, in honour of Mrs. Percy Mitford, friend of Lady Adela, and investor in the Cochrane family's enterprises.

By 1888 several buildings existed including the Cochrane's private home, bunk houses, a store, hotel, livery stable and saloon. In 1891 school was set up in the old saloon, with Miss Isabel Monilaws of Bruce County, Ontario, its first teacher. Ten children attended. A poor location and lack of suitable trees doomed the lumbering venture and so the Cochrane's attempted several other businesses including coal mining and clay brick manufacturing. The town continued to grow with the addition of a blacksmith shop and the Anglican Church, however, business did not flourish and from 1893 to 1896 the town site was progressively abandoned. The Anglican Church was moved to the town of Cochrane and still stands today.

The School Name Selection Committee had some excellent entries in the NAME THE NEW SCHOOL contest and it was a difficult decision to make. However, in the end, appreciation of the site's history and heritage swayed the final vote. More information about the history of Mitford can be found in the book, Big Hill Country, Cochrane and Area Historical Society, c1977, on pages 133 - 135