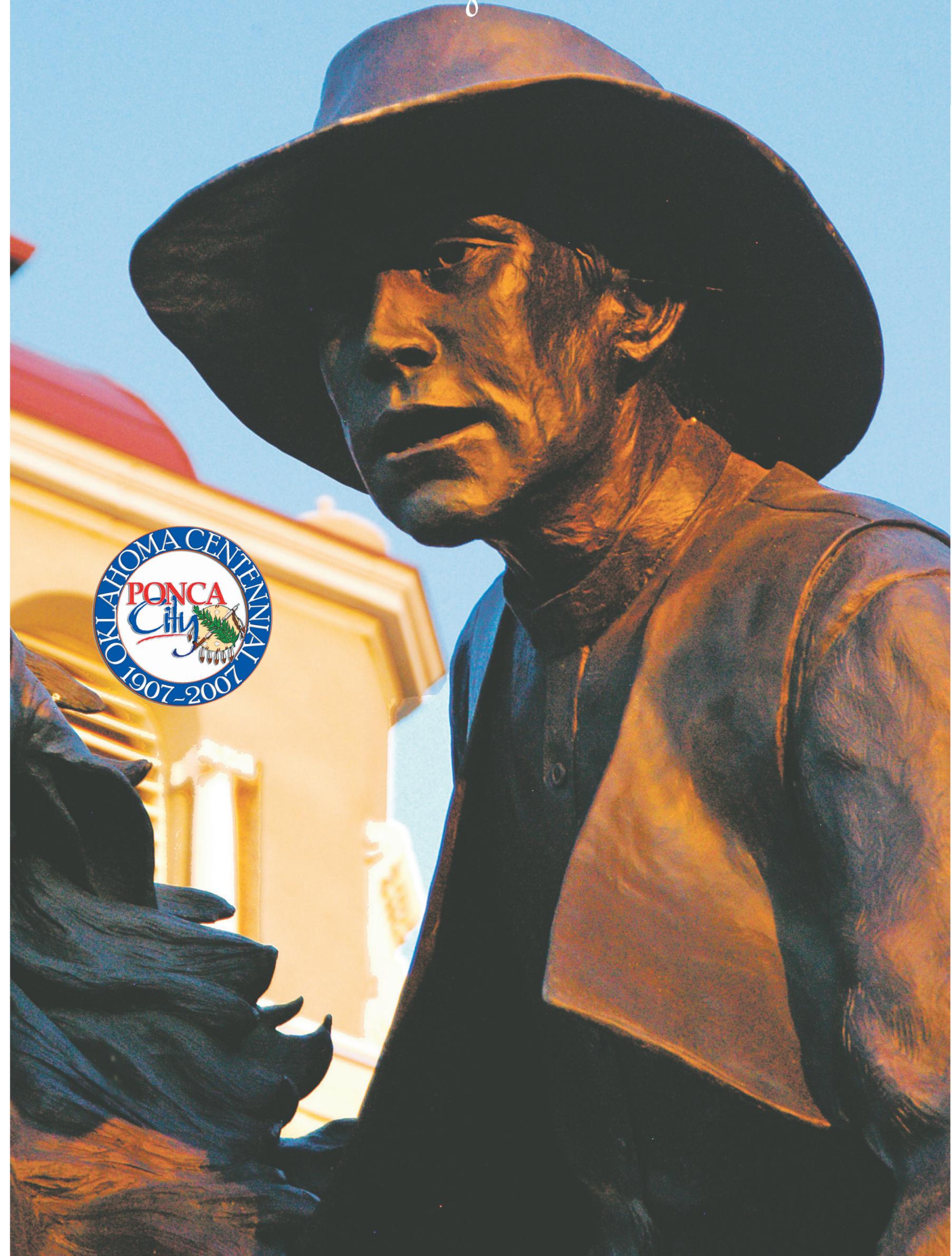


# Oklahoma CENTENNIAL

1907 & 2007





MCKINLEY SCHOOL was located at 1601 South Fifth Street. The original land for the building of McKinley Elementary was bought in October of 1926 for \$900 from the Ponca City Development Company for the purpose of erecting a school building.

## McKinley Elementary School Property Purchased in 1926

McKinley Elementary School was located at 1601 South Fifth Street. The original land for the building of McKinley Elementary was bought in October of 1926 for \$900 from the Ponca City Development Company for the purpose of erecting a school building.

In June of 1929, additional property was bought for \$1 from this same company. The actual date of construction of McKinley Elementary is uncertain.

The district purchased an additional 12 lots by McKinley in 1952.

The McKinley building was dedicated on Feb. 8, 1951. President of the Board of Education, E. M. Trout, gave the presentation of the building. Superintendent J. Win Payne introduced the keynote speaker, Mrs. Eva Smiley, principal at Garfield Elementary School.

In 1951, 14 staff members and 354 students were present that year.

Enrollment at McKinley School was approximately 265 students.

School officials have an indication that some property at the McKinley site was bought in 1952. Whether that was additional property or the original cannot be determined.

There is a deed dated 1926 but the property description is too difficult to reconcile as to when the school was built i.e., in 1926 or later.

One incident reported on March 29, 1974, stated that 37 McKinley students and one teacher were taken by ambulance to the hospital due to some type of fumes that were making them sick.

It was reported by Ponca City Police Chief Long and Investigator H. Goodman to be a very strong odor of some type of fumes in the air

which had a garlic-acid odor and seared the nostrils. The rest of the McKinley children were walked to Garfield Park. The source of the fumes was unknown.

Cost of McKinley School operation for the 1973-74 school year was \$165,111. This included salaries, utilities, fixed charges, and maintenance and supplies. Due to low enrollment and the financial cost to continue to operate the school, McKinley was closed during the summer of 1974.

Minutes from the Ponca City Board of Education meeting held on June 10, 1974, stated, "The Board gave consideration of adjustments in attendance areas for students made necessary because of reduced revenue due to decrease in enrollment and average daily attendance."

After due consideration given to the alternatives as presented by the Superintendent, a motion was made by Baumert, seconded by O'Meilia, and is as follows: To maintain quality education, and for economic reasons, McKinley School not be operated for the 1974-75 school year. Motion carried.

Students were notified by mail that they would be attending another school for the fall of 1974. McKinley was sold to Dale Pickens after the board accepted the highest sealed bid for the purchase of the building and 2.9 acres of property at a meeting on Nov. 13, 1978.

A letter from Superintendent Dr. Allen Robson stated, "Because of declining elementary enrollment, it has been necessary to close McKinley School and to combine McKinley and Garfield School Districts that are within the city limits

of Ponca City. Therefore, it is necessary to transfer all bus students who attended McKinley or Garfield last school year to another school. This correspondence is to inform you that your child or children are being transferred to another school for the 1974-75 school year."

At a board meeting on Aug. 23, 1974, the City of Ponca City asked the board to lease the McKinley facility to the City.

At the Sept. 9, 1974, board meeting, the board approved a one-year lease with the City of Ponca City to lease the McKinley facility to the City.

Bus students were being transferred in to McKinley in the preceding years in order to maintain the number of students who were in the building as the student population in that part of town was declining.

The district kept the building for several years but the cost of insurance and vandalism to the building led the Board to advertise the building and land for sale in the fall of 1978. The campus had 2.9 acres and the building had 13 classrooms, a gym, a lunch room and principal's office.

The board of education advertised in the Tulsa World, the Daily Oklahoman and The Ponca City News for bids and it was sold in November 1978 for \$40,100.

The building sold several times during the next few years until it was bought by the Conoco Oil Company. As the building had deteriorated and contained considerable amount of asbestos containing materials, with continued vandalism and safety concerns, the building was eventually demolished by Conoco.

# Attucks School Provided Education for Many in PC

**Editor's Note: The following information comes from a report given to the Ponca City Board of Education in 1965 on integration in the Ponca City Public Schools.**

Prior to the Supreme Court decision of 1955, which banned segregation in public schools the Ponca City School district had six elementary schools, one junior high school and one senior high school, and the Attucks Separate School, consisting of grades one through 12.

This school, along with a one teacher elementary school in Newkirk, comprised the Separate Schools in Kay County. The Separate Schools served the black students in the area.

The schools were financed by a county wide levy. The high school students from Newkirk were transported to the Attucks High School in Ponca City.

Attucks School, located in the southeast part of the city, was in an area of predominantly black families. The school was a complete school consisting of all 12 grades and offered a complete program leading to graduation.

In addition to the regular shop course offered to the boys, they had a complete shoe repair shop, and for the girls, a course was offered in cosmetology.

The school sponsored a complete program of extracurricular activities, including all sports such as football, basketball, track and tennis. The school also sponsored a music program, both instrumental and vocal.

For the 1955-56 school year, after the Supreme Court decision in the spring of 1955, all students in the junior and senior high grades were given freedom of choice to either attend Attucks School or enroll in the public junior or senior high school.

About 10 or 15 students chose to attend the Junior High School and about the same number enrolled at the Senior High School. According to the Plan of Integration for the Ponca City Public Schools, they were immediately given the opportunity to participate in any program offered in the school.

The plan said, "One of the

colored boys made an enviable record on the Ponca City Senior High School football team."

A Ponca City woman, who was a senior at Po-Hi that year, said she remembered him and his name was Booker T. Washington.

The Attucks School continued to operate a full program for the first students enrolled in the public schools.

Beginning with the 1956-57 school year, the junior and senior high portion of the Attucks School was closed and all the students in these grades were integrated into the junior and senior high schools. At that time there was only one junior high school, the present Ponca City Mid High School.

Prior to the closing of the junior high and high school program at Attucks, there were 14 teachers employed at the school. Two of the teachers were integrated into the public schools. Four others were offered employment in the public schools, but declined the offer.

One of the teachers integrated was Evelyn Hunter. She was transferred to the junior high school social studies department. According to the Plan of Integration, she was a very popular teacher with both the students and other faculty members.

The other teacher was Percy Hytche, who was transferred to the mathematics department at the senior high. According to the plan, he had a successful year in 1956-57 and was offered re-employment, but he had been granted a fellowship at Oklahoma State University to work on his masters degree.

The local Board of Education granted him a full year's leave of absence to pursue this scholarship with the full intention of taking him back into the system at the end of that year. Instead of returning to Ponca City, Hytche accepted a position in the mathematics department of Maryland State University.

In 1965 he was still teaching there. In 1965-66, Hytche was offered a full scholarship to OSU to further his education in mathematics and to work toward a doctor's degree.

The Attucks School served as a community center for the entire neighborhood, which was geographically located in the southeast part of the City. Immediately joining the school ground was a branch of the Ponca City Public Library.

A swimming pool was located on the school grounds, between the school and the Public Library.

This was one of the pools jointly operated by the Ponca City Public Schools and the City of Ponca City for the three summer months when there was no school.

The city owned another pool on South Sixth Street, and the school owned the pool at Attucks and one at Lincoln Elementary School. (See ATTUCKS, Page 12I)

## Music Teacher Association Helped Kids

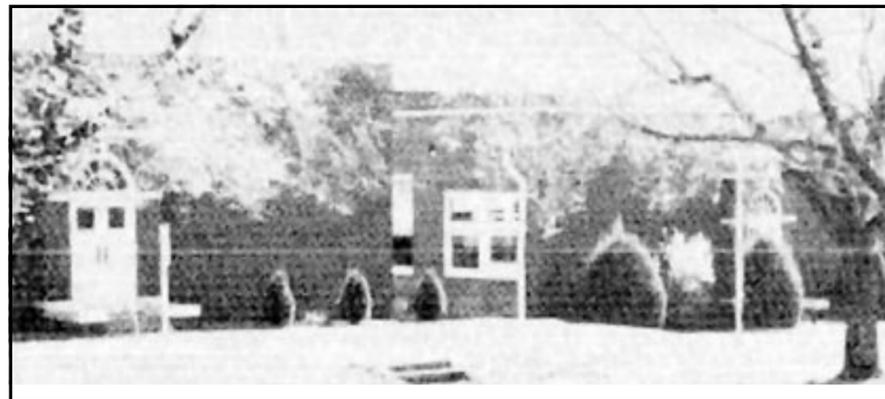
The Ponca City Area Branch of the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association meets bi-monthly for the purpose of advancing musical knowledge and education.

Mrs. M.D. Timberlake was president and Julia B. Hunt secretary in 1969. The membership consists of those teachers who have met the standards of competency and have received the approval of the Oklahoma Accreditation Committee as qualified teachers.

The Oklahoma Music Teachers Association is an affiliate of the Music Teachers National Association.

A project of the local branch was the sponsoring of the Northeast District Oklahoma Music Teachers Association Achievement Audition at Northern Oklahoma College.

Members with national accreditation in 1969 were Mrs. Timberlake, Miss Hunt, Mrs. Ervin Lebeda, Mrs. Kay L. Motz, Mrs. Thomas O. Moehle, Mrs. Lena Sizelove, and Mrs. Frances Wood Thompson, Mrs. Kay Bewley, Sister Madlyn J. Pape and Mrs. Herbert Skidmore.



PRIOR TO THE Supreme Court decision of 1955, which banned segregation in public schools, the Ponca City School district had six elementary schools, one junior high school and one senior high school, and the Attucks Separate School, consisting of grades one through 12.

## Plesant View School Now Vo-Ag Area

The Pleasant View School District building was demolished at the beginning of 1996 in order to allow the building of a new classroom building for the vocational agriculture classes.

The failure of the roof and the cost of renovating the deteriorating older building resulted in the decision to build a new structure that would meet the new building codes and allow a welding shop to be adjacent to the classrooms.

The asbestos-containing materials that surrounded all of the pipes on the one story old building were removed

prior to the demolition.

The Pleasant View school building was buff brick and had some 2,069 square feet. There was a small kitchen and a small one-foot tall stage in a larger room with at least four classrooms and restrooms. The acreage of the original site is not known, but the Ponca City Public Schools acquired the original site for \$1 in July of 1959.

It is thought that the land was in excess of five acres. Ponca City High School began using it as a FFA complex and livestock barns were added in 1985 and 1987. Additional acres were acquired in 1999

to bring the total acres of the current vocational agricultural complex to 11.87 acres.

Until 1979, the Pioneer Chapter of the Disabled Veterans of America had been using the old Pleasant View building as a meeting place. Afterwards, the Ponca City FFA Chapter met at the old building for a number of years.

In 1996, a new 5,950-square-foot vocational agriculture building was completed on the site of the former old Pleasant View School. This building was constructed for \$198,448 as part of the 1995 bond issue and was completed for the 1996-97 school year.



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# West Junior High Added As Enrollment Expanded

To relieve the increased enrollment at the existing Ponca City Junior High School, a second junior high was built on the west side of town in 1961 at 1401 West Grand Avenue.

The old Ponca City Junior High took the name "East" and the new school took the name "West."

Both buildings housed seventh and eighth grade students.

Construction of the school and equipment totaled \$1,616,037.35.

According to the program for the dedication held on Sunday, Dec. 3, 1961, "West Junior High School combines artistic beauty with functional qualities that place Ponca City among the leaders in modern school plant design."

It continued "The occult balance of the trapezoidal auditorium and the circular fine arts center meet at the main entrance with a glass, two-story stairwell adding esthetic beauty to a functional facility."

The program said, "In a growing community with pros-

pects for further expansion, the building was constructed so that when the need arises, senior high school facilities can readily be added."

It continued, "In establishing a second Junior High School plant in Ponca City, citizens are ever mindful that change is inevitable and challenging. With the wholehearted approval and backing of the citizenry, a thrilling milestone is marked in the annals of Ponca City history."

The site development plan shows the existing school building and the future projected high school area. The area that the school sits on is adequate to include a football field, track, baseball diamond, tennis courts, and more parking facilities.

The first principal at West Junior High was Dr. Allen Robson, later to become superintendent of schools.

The north side of the south ground floor area is equipped to be air-conditioned. Three basic colors were used in the planning of the interior décor, a background of beige,

turquoise and Swedish red. These colors, with harmonizing variations, are repeated effectively throughout the building.

Because of outside entrances, the gymnasium, the Circle Building, auditorium and cafeteria could be used independently of the rest of the building. The structural joists that are exposed were all topped with acoustical tile, which was used throughout the building. The heavy work areas were floored with terrazzo and the remainder with asphalt tile with the exception of a few carpeted areas.

Lighting throughout the instructional area (there were 38 teaching stations) measured at least 40 foot-candles at desk height. South, east and west exposures have Koolshade screens for light control, which aided in temperature control.

The clinic suite had four rooms and two toilets. Included were separate areas for boys and girls, reception room and examining area. (See WEST, Page 12)



EAST JUNIOR High is pictured here in 1939.

# East Junior High Continued Education on Original Site

East Junior High was the original site of the very first school building in Ponca City.

Just two months after the opening of the Cherokee Strip on Nov. 16, 1893, Ponca City celebrated the completion of the first school building on the site of the present East Middle School. Reportedly the finest in the territory, the first building and equipment cost \$1,600.

By 1895, citizens acknowledged the need for more space with a growing school population and a six-room stone school replaced the first building which had burned. It was replaced in 1911 by another native stone building which was remodeled in 1923 and condemned in 1938. After the condemnation, the building was torn down and the present building was built in 1939 at a cost of \$441,216.43 including equipment.

Ponca City Junior High School was opened in 1939 in a buff brick building located at 612 East Grand Avenue. The Public Works Administration funded 45 percent of the cost of the original East building. All seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students in the Ponca City School District attended this school.

Ralph R. Lester was the first principal with a staff of 54, and the students were known as the Junior High Kittens and their colors were blue and gold. The Junior High Kittens were the mascot from 1928 until 1993. The mascot was changed to the Cougars in 1993 when East and West combined into the Mid-High at East and the Middle School at West and continued until 1998 when the Middle School took the Wildcats as mascot.

The building was built to accommodate approximately 1,200 students. During Ralph Lester's term as principal, enrollment was 1,500 students. As was stated in one of the old Blue and Gold Newspapers, "East is so crowded that during the

changing of classes, a student cannot stoop to pick up a pencil if he dropped one."

One of the most interesting features with the building was the underground tunnel running from the Administration Building located across the street under Grand Avenue to the main hall of the new building. This 500-foot tunnel was created to eliminate traffic hazards that could occur to the students having to cross Grand Avenue and insured an all-weather passage way. The tunnel still exists today; however, it is never used.

The dedication of the 1939 building and open house were held on Thursday, Feb. 23, 1939. President of the Ponca City School Board of Education, Merl P. Long, gave the address and Superintendent of Schools, Charles P. Howell was the keynote speaker.

According to the dedication booklet, "The auditorium had symmetry and simplicity. The large stage is complete with front, proscenium, cyclorama, and concert curtains, as well as a full set of plastic interior and exterior scenery. The colorful lighting effects add much to its beauty. The piano is Steinway Grand."

The auditorium was later named the Ralph P. Lester Auditorium and carries that name today at East Middle School.

In 1950 the present building was remodeled. Improvements made to the building included an expansion to the existing cafeteria in 1956, the addition of a wrestling room in 1974, a computer lab in 1980-81, a science lab and home economics rooms were updated in 1989 plus heating and air-conditioning was installed.

According to the formal address given at the 50th anniversary on Dec. 3, 1989, by Virginia Carey, Ponca City School Board President at the time, "At the official dedication ceremonies on Thursday, Feb. 23, 1939, the East Middle School Audi-

torium was filled to overflowing. Over 1,400 people occupied the seats and stood in the aisles. For some unknown reason, right in the middle of the program, the electricity went off and everyone was plunged into darkness. People made the best of the situation by visiting with each other, and some even turned on flashlights they had brought.

(See EAST, Page 12)

## Student Vote Changed Name Of Schools

Ponca City sixth through eighth grade students made local history during elections held in 1993 to rename the two junior high schools and the mascot that will serve both schools.

Based on election results, West Junior high will next year be known as Ponca City Middle School. PCMS received 445 total votes. Pioneer Middle School came in second with 275 votes, while E. W. Marland Middle School placed third with 227 votes.

East Junior High School will next year be known as Ponca City Mid High School. The new name received 667 votes. Placing second was Centennial, followed by John F. Kennedy and Ponca City Preparatory school.

The strong, stealth-like Cougar was selected as the joint mascot for the two schools. The Bobcats was second with 238 votes, followed by the Patriots (130) and Rams (61).

The school and name changes were necessitated by a plan recently adopted by the Ponca City Schools' Board of Education.

Beginning with the 1993-94 school year, all seventh grade students will be at West Junior High School, while all ninth grade students will be at East Junior High School. Eighth grade students will continue to attend their respective junior high schools.



A SECOND junior high was built on the west side of town in 1961 at 1401 West Grand Avenue.

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Not Pictured  
Dan Wheeler

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CONSTRUCTION began on the new school building west of the two-room building in 1919. On Nov. 6, 1919, the school board named the new fourth ward school as the Lincoln Building.

## Lincoln School Began in 1915 As West Side Growth Boomed

In 1915, a two-room brick building was constructed on Palm for a cost of \$5,143. As the growth of Ponca City grew to the west side, the school was called Westside School.

Construction began on the new school building west of the two-room building in 1919. On Nov. 6, 1919, the school board named the new fourth ward school as the Lincoln Building.

On Jan. 28, 1920, students moved into the new Lincoln School. The small red brick building was used for beginners. Higher grades were housed in the new structure. This new building took some nine months to complete. The entrance faced east. A wing on the east side of the gym consisted of a hallway with restrooms on the north and south ends, four classrooms, a teacher's room, principal's office and reception area.

Architectural drawings show that on the west side of the gym was a hallway with restrooms on the north and the south ends and four rooms. The large gymnasium/auditorium had a balcony, moving picture room and a large stage. The building was steam heated and the furnace was in the basement. Cost of this new Lincoln was \$70,475.

In 1926, Lincoln pool was built — another gift to Ponca City children by oilman and philanthropist Lew Wentz. Earlier he had donated the flagpole and other playground equipment to Lincoln School. The flagpole still remains at that site.

The first addition to the original 1919 building was added in 1930 and included four classrooms, two on the north side and two on the south side of the existing gymnasium at a cost of \$21,845.

In 1933, part of Lincoln building was remodeled at a cost of \$3,485 — bringing the total expenditure on Lincoln to \$100,949 and \$6,925 on grounds.

The school board reviewed preliminary sketches for additions to all elementary school buildings.

On Aug. 19, 1935, before proceeding with additions, school authorities awaited advice on regulations from WPA (Works Progress Administration) authorities in Washington. The school would be responsible for 55 percent of the funding and 45 percent would be federally funded. Bids were taken on Sept. 3, 1935, on WPA projects including additions to Lincoln. The additions were constructed under WPA regulations.

The completion of the Lincoln addition on the southwest wing of the school in 1936 consisted of four new rooms: a science room, instrumental music room, library room and a room for vocal study. Minor renovations were made in 1938.

A bond issue was passed in October 1948 allowing \$390,000 to update and build additions to the school. It was decided to tear down the original two-room red brick building. Work was completed in March 1950 on the new Lincoln School.

The school children attended class at East Junior High School while construction was under way.

The extensive remodeling included a teachers' lounge, restrooms, student bookstore, nine new classrooms, and a lunchroom.

The school did not have lunchroom facilities before this construction. The southwest wing of the building housed the special education classes. The main entrance to the building was changed from the east to the north.

On March 29, 1950, the public was invited to the new Lincoln opening. Superintendent J. Winn Payne stated that the new Lincoln of buff brick and spacious windows was one of the most modern in the southwest.

Another bond issue was passed in 1973 to provide new windows, new lights, and electrical wiring, new and lowered ceilings in the classrooms, redecoration, painting, carpeting, and landscaping. This renovation was completed in 1976.

A four-classroom addition on the southeast was made to Lincoln in October 1986. Installation of roof-mounted air conditioners, tile roof over the gym, insulation and electrical work were also completed. This project cost \$497,000.

In the summer of 1991, the Lincoln pool was demolished and filled with dirt because it did not meet the state regulations for bathers. In the 1994 bulletin created for the closing of this old Lincoln site, the staff and alumni stated, "Lincoln School has been modified, renovated, updated and added onto many times to accommodate the educational needs of the community. The building has served its purpose well over the years, and many parents, former students and staff members carry fond memories of good times spent here. The building is only one element of 'Lincoln School.' It is the people, memories and traditions that embody the true meaning of Lincoln School and these will continue in the future."

Ground breaking ceremony for the 52,804-square-foot new and current Lincoln Elementary located at 1501 West Grand was held on Tuesday, April 23, 1996. Additions in 2000 included the kindergarten center and cafeteria which added 9,029 square feet to the building. Lincoln has the largest enrollment of all of the elementary schools at approximately 475 students.

Led by principal Shelley Wilson and principal intern Becky Krueger, Lincoln serves grades pre-k through fifth grade. There are 55 staff members and approximately 475 students.

## Pioneer Tech Center Began With Large Voter Turnout

The vote to establish Pioneer Area Vo-Tech (now Pioneer Technology Center) was March 9, 1971, with 3,528 in favor of the proposition and 296 against it. It was one of the largest turnouts for a school election in many years.

Kay County voters showed their enthusiasm for the school as they voted to approve a three and one-half mill operational fund at the polls in May 1972. The vote was 1,732 to 239.

Other activities during this preliminary period included zoning the county for election of board members and their subsequent election.

During this time, Pioneer Area Vocational-Technical School was the official name given to the facility.

First board of education members included Larry Cannon, president; Carl Balcer, member; Ralph Lester, member, and Dr. James Kirk, member.

Dr. James Carpenter was the first superintendent for Pioneer Area Vocational-Technical School.

Bad weather came to Oklahoma early in 1972 and the opening date was delayed. Board members voted in January 1973, to proceed with a proposed Licensed Practical Nursing program for the fall term. Arrangements were made with the Blackwell General Hospital for class to be held there with on-the-job training to be conducted both at Ponca City Hospital and the Blackwell Hospital.

In 1980, Pioneer Area Vo-tech

added 25,000 square feet to its existing 74,500 square feet of floor space. The new addition included five new shop areas and a student break area. Total enrollment for the fall classes at that time was 943 students. Of that number, 444 students were full or half time students in day classes and 499 area adults enrolled in part-time (short-term evening classes).

In 1990, Pioneer Technology Center held a groundbreaking for the business assistance center and incubator. Although some of the programs in the business assistance center were already in place, the business incubator provided an added benefit to area entrepreneurs looking for a place to start. The client-based programs like the small business management, self-employment training, and bid assistance program started in 1988 and 1989.

Today, Pioneer Technology Center has received its seventh Gold Star Award and employs 95 full and/or part-time employees.

Annual enrollment averages about 500 full and half time students in day classes. More than 725 students enroll in adult short-term training classes each semester and 8,593 students receive training through the business and industry services area.

PTC offers full-time training in automotive service technology, early care and education, construction technology, cosmetology, culinary arts, health careers certification with medi-

cal assisting, collision repair technology, business and information technology education, machine tool technology, industrial technology, practical nursing, and welding technology.

Pioneer Tech also offers financial assistance through grants, part time employment and scholarships. This assistance may be offered individually or in various combinations depending on the degree of need.

PTC offers support services through the following programs: Supported Employment, New Beginning, SHARE, Drop-out Recovery for students ages 16 to 20 who have left the educational environment, GED and Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Orientation for sophomores who are at-risk of dropping out of high school.

Through the adult training and development program, more than 300 courses are available ranging from a few hours to complete semester offerings.

Other courses available through the adult training and development program include, emergency medical technician, machine tool, welding, certified nurse aide, cake decorating, as well as many more.

PTC's BIS division offers client-based and customized training programs that include, self-employment training, small business management, agriculture business management, bid assistance, management development, safety training, industry training, and the business incubator program.



KAY COUNTY voters showed their enthusiasm for Pioneer Technology Center as they voted to approve a three and one-half mill operational fund at the polls in May 1972. The vote was 1,732 to 239.

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Mary Virginia Marland  
**1st Wife to E.W. Marland**  
1876 • 1926



Lew Haines Wentz  
**Oil Businessman & Philanthropist**  
1877 • 1949



Lillian Francis Smith  
**"Princess Wenona"**  
**101 Ranch**  
1876 • 1926



Burton Seymour Barnes  
**Ponca City's 1st Mayor**  
1876 • 1906



Joseph Carson Miller  
**Son & Cowboy to the 101 Ranch**  
1905 • 2001



George Washington Miller  
**101 Ranch Founder & Father**  
1881 • 1929



George Lee Miller  
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# White Eagle School Provided Training for Indian Students

**Editors Note: The following story was published in the 1968 Cherokee strip edition of the Ponca City News.**

A boarding school for Ponca Indian children, which annually housed more than 100 students, was operated for 39 years at White Eagle. The school closed as a boarding school in 1919, but was kept as a school and social center until 1928.

The following information on the school is taken from the book, "White Eagle," by Dr. C.L. Zimmerman, and some letters written in 1902 and 1903, by Gasper Edwards, superintendent of the school. The letters are among papers at the Pioneer Woman Museum.

It is reported that 50 Indians worked on construction of Ponca School, completed in 1880. Among the relics placed in its cornerstone were an old arrow, a Sioux scalp taken by Little Bear, a war whistle

made of eagle bone, a newspaper, bear claws, elk teeth, bead work, tribal documents, a peace pipe, and "many small articles."

Several graduates of the school went on to Carlisle (Pa.) Indian School. Ponca School offered industrial course in farming and stock-raising, school making, carpentry, tailoring and blacksmithing.

Top instructors made as much as \$720 a year. One letter by Edwards, addressed to the Indian agent on Nov. 12, 1902, said one of the woman teachers was getting "very much dissatisfied" with her \$480 a year salary and Edwards feared she would leave the school. He recommended that she get an increase to \$600 a year.

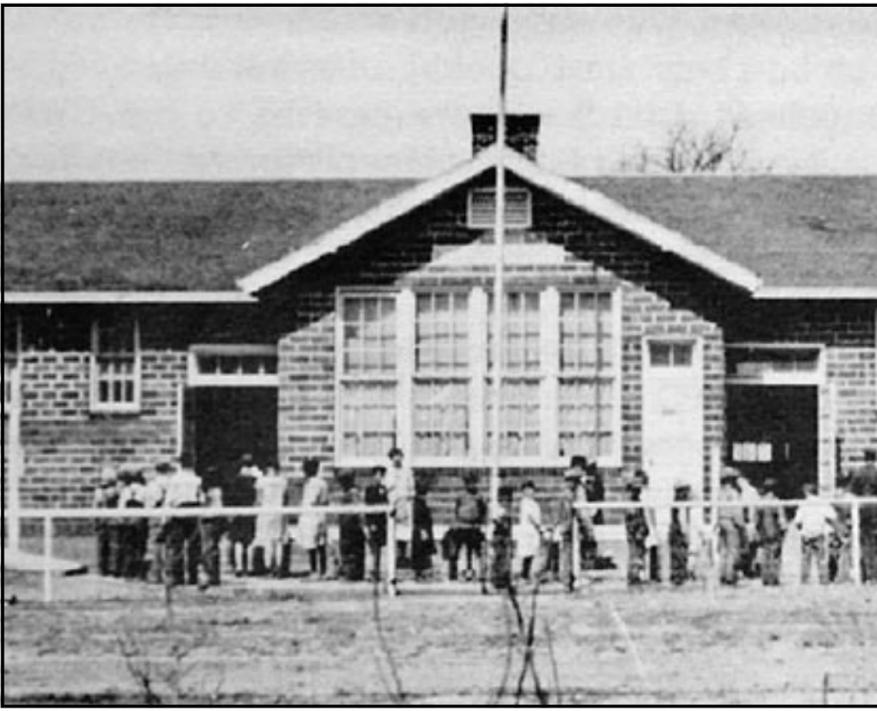
Three Ponca School building was destroyed by fire several times. It was decided that the building should be torn down in April 1928. George King, one of the Indians who

helped build the school, also was present when it was razed.

Children we transferred to Cantonment School and later to a boarding school at the Pawnee Indian Agency. According to the book, "White Eagle," hundreds of small Indian children gained their first knowledge of the English language at Ponca School, as they heard only Ponca language in their homes.

In April 1902, evidently soon after Edwards took over as superintendent at Ponca School, he wrote a 10-page report to the superintendent of Indian schools in Washington, D.C., reporting in plain "Angla Saxin" (sic) on inefficiencies. Edwards complained that in all the vocational courses students were being taught to do things in such an inefficient manner that none could make a profit in his chosen vocation after he left school.

(See WHITE EAGLE, Page 6I)



MCCORD SCHOOL is pictured during the year 1924.

## McCord First Began in 1899 As a 'Subscription' School

McCord School was originally started in 1899 as a subscription school. It was formed by Lee McCord (for whom the school was named), Chris Godberson, Joe Dooling and HA Panches.

Subscription fees were \$1 per month per child. The attendance varied from 16 to 20 students, and the grades ran from first through eighth.

The exact location of the first school is in doubt. Most probably it was north, east, or northeast of the present Peter School. And it wasn't a building — it was held in a tent!

The school moved after the first year to a real building. It was on a back porch on McCord Road. The school changed locations once more before moving around 1922 to the area now owned by the school.

On March 8, 1922, School District No. 77 of McCord was created. The land was donated by Everett Revard, an Osage Indian. Ray Lesert later bought the land and donated a like amount of land back to the school.

School was held in a wooden-framed building that sat on the southeast portion of the current playground (although the playground didn't extend as far to the east as it does now).

Around 1924, a new brick building was built at the corner of the lot owned by the school. The other building was sold and moved.

The new school had two rooms running east and west, with an entry/cloakroom extending south for six feet and a basement below. As early as the 1942-43 school year (possibly later), the cloakroom was extended southward to make a full room.

McCord now had three teachers. Principal/teacher was Fern Stansbury.

They hired their first cooks, and this extended room became the kitchen. Lunches were carried to the students on trays and eaten in their classrooms. Prior to that time, students brought their lunches. At some point, the basement became the first school cafeteria.

On Dec. 4, 1944, the school board voted to send the eighth grade to Ponca City. This is the first time state aid was available to do this. It is believed that a year later the seventh grade was also sent to Ponca City, leaving McCord with first through sixth grades. The first kindergarten wouldn't be added until the 1969-70 school year.

On Feb. 7, 1950, the school board took a petition to Pawhuska for a new school room to be added. This, most probably, was the buff-

bricked portion connected to the east side of the original building.

In 1953, two more rooms were built. They sat out by themselves and are the two rooms presently located across from the rest rooms.

In 1953, Mr. Clifford Abel became the principal/teacher.

During the 1957-58 school years, the rest rooms were built, but were not connected to the building to the west. (All the years prior to this, there were two outhouses — one for the boys and one for the girls.)

In 1961, the gymnasium with basement was completed. It was to be used as a bomb shelter in nuclear war. (The dressing rooms were finished in 1963.) The cafeteria was moved to below the gym at that time.

In the summer of 1967, the space between the rest rooms and the building to the west was enclosed to make another classroom.

In 1969, the rooms across the hallway from the office were built, but they were connected to the office portion. It wasn't until the early 1980s that the "outdoor breezeway" between the south (original) building and these classrooms on the north side was roofed over and enclosed to make a hallway.

McCord had no mascot until the 1970-71 school years when the graduating sixth grade class decided it should be a panther. Royal blue and gold were decided to be the school colors.

Clifford Abel retired in 1974. Foster Johnson was principal/teacher one year. Jim Christie became principal in September 1975 until 1981.

In 1978, a bond issue was passed and a new building was built north of the school. It provided the school with six more classrooms, new rest rooms, and a teachers' lounge. Jack Hudack was principal from 1981 to 1984.

In the 1983-84 school years, an official school library was begun. Fredda Odum was the librarian. It shared a room with the kindergarten class that year. The district grew very quickly, enrollment increased nearly a 100 students. In the spring of 1984, another bond issue was passed that provided money for the expansion of the newest building.

The following school year, the library took up residency in the hallway of the oldest building for one semester. By Christmas of that year, the newest building had three more classrooms, a library/media center, and one more additional office space — all added to the east end of the building.

The teachers' lounge has been replaced with the new construction, and the basement below the oldest portion of the school became the new teachers' lounge. The library moved out of the hallway into the new library/media center.

Mike Stiglets became principal from 1984 to 1987. The enrollment increased to 325 students. Boyd Braden became principal in 1987-88 and is the current elementary superintendent. He attended school here in 1969 in fifth grade as well as his mother and brothers.

In 1992 the Americans with Disabilities law required access for all students in schools. McCord district passed a \$545,000 bond issue to build a cafeteria, and office. The Bricker property was bought just north of the classroom building.

The cafeteria had the first adult designated rest rooms. The dining area also allowed space for assemblies, with an adequate sound system and heat and air-conditioning. Covered walkways were added between the now three buildings.

ConocoPhillips transferred many to Bartlesville, and Houston. Timberline Trailer Park closed because of the sewage system getting into the Arkansas River. The school enrollment dropped to 220 students, but with Burbank school closing students have gotten transfers to McCord the current enrollment is 250 students with 19 part-time and full time teachers, and 16 support staff.

The attendance has grown from 20 students in 1899 to present-day totals of approximately 250. There are currently around 35 teachers, aids, and other staff members employed, compared to the one teacher on staff in 1899.



THE MESS HALL at White Eagle School. A boarding school for Ponca Indian children, which annually housed more than 100 students, was operated for 39 years at White Eagle. The school closed as boarding school in 1919.

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**GARFIELD BECAME** a school in 1920 with four frame bungalows on the first 10 lots of the present site which were obtained from the federal government by patent in 1912.



## Ponca City Quickly Opened High School

In September of 1893, a public meeting was called to organize a provisional government and set in motion the wheels of municipal government to provide for the schooling of the youths of the town.

A large amount of labor and money was subscribed and a competent committee was appointed with full authority to proceed with the erection of a school, which for a few months also served as a public hall and church.

"On Nov. 6, 1893, just two months after the opening of the Cherokee Strip, Ponca City celebrated the completion of her fine school building — at that time the largest, handsomest, and best public school building in the whole territory of Oklahoma," quoted from the Ponca City Board of Trade in 1894.

It was a building 32 feet by 64 feet in size, one story high, and was divided into two rooms which could easily be thrown together by means of sliding doors.

The building and equipment cost \$1,600.

The building was located between Sixth and Seventh Streets on Grand Avenue. The high school and grammar grades occupied the school building and the intermediate and primary departments were in a building on Grand across the street from the post office today.

Because of the large attendance, all of the rooms were overcrowded and arrangements had to be made to secure the McFaggart building, which had been moved over from Cross, for school purposes.

"The fact that three quarter sections of the townsite were entered under the government townsite law which provided for \$10 per acre from the entry man, and returned to the school treasurer of the city, gave Ponca City what might have been called a working capital of \$4,500 for her schools. Probably this was the only school district in the territory that could claim the distinction of having been, almost from the beginning, on a cash basis."

— The Last Run  
"The opening day of school is well documented. The Board of Trade had arranged an interesting program consisting of athletic sports,

horse races, Indian war dances and barbecue, concluding with the grand ball and banquet in the evening. Special trains were run from Kansas and 5,000 strangers were entertained."

Mrs. Nate Hampton, mother of Mrs. Marvin K. VanWinkle, Mrs. Anna D. Robinson and Mr. J.W. Phillips were employed and taught a three-month term of school beginning about Dec. 11, 1893.

According to the Ponca City Courier on Thursday, Dec. 14, 1893, "On Monday morning, the Ponca City school opened on time with Professor J.W. Phillips as principal, and Mrs. Anna D. Knight Robinson as assistant. Professor R.A. Sullins, county superintendent, was present and made a pleasing address, again reentering the oft-repeated statement that the building then occupied is the largest and finest public school building on the whole of Oklahoma Territory. A roll was prepared and it was found that 136 as bright and tidy children as can be found in the land were on hand to begin at their first hour. The number has increased each day since, and at a conservative estimate it is expected that not less than 200 pupils will be in attendance before the holidays."

When the district was organized on Jan. 6, 1894, P.I. Brown was named treasurer, W.E. McGuire, director, and L.S. Hutchins, clerk. These same men were reelected at the annual meeting May 8, 1894.

The public school of Ponca City opened Monday, Sept. 24, 1894, for the first full school year. Enrollment for the first day was 169 and increased daily. It was estimated that the total enrollment was not less than 250 and more nearly around 300.

The school district included considerable adjacent territory with a total of 613 persons of school age in the district.

The high school and grammar grades occupied the school building which was located between Sixth and Seventh Street on Grand Avenue, while the intermediate and primary departments were in a building on Grand across the street from the post office today.

(See SCHOOL, Page 111)

## Garfield Moves Into 21st Century

The original Garfield building was built in 1924 facing the West at 601 South Seventh Street.

Bordered on two sides by spacious city parks, this 28,718-square-foot, buff brick, white stone-trimmed building with red tile roof was acknowledged as one of the most attractive elementary schools at the time.

Garfield became a school in 1920 with four frame bungalows on the first 10 lots of the present site which were obtained from the federal government by patent in 1912. That same year, 10 additional lots were obtained for \$7,500.

The original building was completed in 1924 at a cost of \$104,297. In 1936, rooms were added to include first grades, science and art at a cost of \$54,734.

In January of 1938, a fire set by an arsonist destroyed records and did minor damage to the building. In 1949, some redecorating was done in the office and teachers' lounge, and a cyclone fence was added.

A fire escape from the upstairs classrooms was added in 1962 and is shown in the picture. The north portable building was added in 1992 and the south portable in 1997.

In 1997, Garfield Elementary School's name was changed to Garfield Academy as a fine arts magnet school for grades four and five. First through third grade students had access to a multi-age, non-graded curriculum in which students moved through the subjects at individual paces. Once a student demonstrated mastery of reading and math at a third grade level, that student was able to move into the fourth grade magnet curriculum.

The magnet school offered special programs which were not available at other schools in the district.

To reflect a commitment to being the school which had served its neighborhood since 1924, they kept the "Garfield" name and to communicate the new focus on arts, they used the "STARS" acronym (Students Taught through the Arts Reaching Success) on all printed materials.

### New Garfield Elementary School 2007

Garfield Elementary celebrated the opening of a brand new school at 600 South Eighth Street in August.

Garfield will serve approximately 280 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The "Stars" are the mascot and blue and orange are the school's colors. Principal Dr. Lori Ryan-Elliott will lead the staff with a vision of "achieving excellence for all students" by using assessments to provide focused learning opportunities.

Garfield Elementary is one of 44 Oklahoma schools in the growing network of Oklahoma A+ Schools, a member of the Tri-State A+ Consortium of schools committed to excellence in education. Research shows that children are most successful when taught through two-way integrated curriculums that include the arts. Garfield teachers adhere to the eight essentials of Oklahoma A+ Schools, which consist of daily arts instruction, multiple intelligences, experiential learning, enriched assessment, integrated curriculum, collaboration, positive climate, and shared leadership. After a week-long immersion in Oklahoma A+ Schools Summer Institute

in 2005, teachers continue to hone skills through yearly staff development provided by the A+ network.

Being an A+ School is the driving force in Garfield's positive culture and success in improving academic achievement for all students. Creating a climate where students and their families feel welcome and safe is the most important factor in maximizing success for all. Freedom to take risks and a hunger for knowledge and growth are admirable traits at Garfield. Every morning at 7:50, students, staff, and visiting school community members meet in the gym for morning opening. This time is dedicated to setting a positive tone for the instructional day. Brain-building activities, daily announcements, focused activities on the Multiple Intelligence and Character First Trait of the Month take place each morning.

Garfield's vision is for every teacher to have the knowledge and skills to meet every child's individual needs by using periodic assessments to identify those needs. Diana Blair will join the staff in August as Response to Intervention Specialist and will work with students in Kindergarten and first grade to provide focused instruction for meeting each child's identified needs in the area of reading.

Curriculum Specialist Debra Ruttman will lead Garfield Elementary through the growth and change process to become an effective Professional Learning Community where staff members work together to provide the most effective tools for learning. The instructional strategies in use each day are word walls, flexible groups, word study, explicit comprehension instruction, monitored independent reading practice, read-alouds, fluency instruction, daily read-

ing logs, Accelerated Math, and focused, individual math activities.

ConocoPhillips serves as Garfield's Partner In Education and the school has a dedicated parent teacher organization that provides a variety of opportunities for enriching the lives of our students and supports the staff in their efforts to provide quality learning. Parental participation and input is encouraged. Research has shown that students achieve at a greater degree when families are involved in their child's educational experience. Every effort is made to involve families and to make them an integral part of each child's learning experience.

## White Eagle . . . . .

(Continued From Page 51)

He said shoemakers were making a \$1.50 pair of shoes that cost the government \$3 to make; tailors making a \$15 suit that cost \$25; three farm workers doing a chore that should require one, etc.

According to a letter to Scvhwarzschild & Suljger Co., the school used about 100 pounds of beef a day, and frequency of delivery was every day to every four days, depending on the temperature. The beef was kept in a "brick meat house, 10 by 12 feet.

The superintendent apparently had difficulty with his teachers over their handling of the pupils. Among his papers was the following notice:

"Attention is called (this is the third time this year) to the fact that corporal punishment that consists in striking pupils about the head and face with the hand, stick or any other thing is expressly forbidden and anyone violating this rule will be held for insubordination.

The last date on any of the Edwards letters was April 25, 1903, in a message to Commissioner W.A. Jones in Washington. Edwards wrote that he was in Ponca City getting information on "irregular payrolls" when Indian Agent J. Jenson warned him to "go back to the school and stay there, and don't come to Ponca City anymore."



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# Bethel School Provided Education for Rural Area

**Editor's Note: The following information came from the History of Kay County, located in the Newkirk Library. The information came from Clella May (Warner) Constant, a member of the New Bethel Home Extension group.**

The other two were a neighbor girl and an older man. They were baptized in the Chickasaw River two miles east of school.

a good or better than ones they had seen in Blackwell.

A 4-H organization was begun. Many children were involved in it.

Bethel Homecoming was suggested by a man who was a former student. These were held until Bethel school building was unfortunately burned. At one of the Homecomings the following poem by Opal (Harris) Tannehill was read.

**BETHEL HOMECOMING**

It was Albert Burkhalter who suggested on day, That we have a Home-coming out Bethel way,

So plans were made, and from that time to this

It has been an annual affair, with only one miss.

Gala times we have had when old school chums meet

Back at old Bethel school and again "Take their seat."

To talk over days of the long, long ago

When you were my sweet and I, your bashful beau.

Why, we've seen Effie Bungardner, and Blanche McGrew,

Little Orie Fox and Nancy Tyler, too.

Christine Morril, the Massey girls, Bess and Ann.

Ethel Taylor, Gladys Robbins, Zaida Brown and Nell Mann.

Isn't fun to see everyone and say, "How-do-you-do?"

(See BETHEL, Page 8!)

After the opening of the Strip, the Bethel School Community was settled five miles northwest of Blackwell.

A dugout was made for the neighborhood children's school. It was 16 by 30 feet, sodded up about three feet at the north end with a window in the north end.

At the south end there was an inside door making enough light except on storm days, when it had to be closed.

Large cracks were in the wall where pencils could be stuck. There were dirt floors and pegs on the wall to hang clothing.

The heating system was a large round stove in the center of the room. Long benches, with backs were placed at the front, on the stage, where classes recited their lessons, while the other seven classes were studying, listening, and sometimes whispering. The dugout had a shingled roof.

When my mother and grandparents moved to this farm, they had to live in the dugout. The school board and neighbors started hauling material with teams and wagons from Hunnewell, Kan., to build a school house.

It was built a quarter mile west on the corner. One carpenter was hired and the rest of the labor was volunteered by neighbors.

A lady one-half mile north suggested naming it Bethel because Bethel is a Bible name. First teacher's salary was \$20 a month for 35 pupils.

Many of the students were larger than the teacher.

Literary was organized soon after the building was completed. Good programs were enjoyed every Friday night.

Later a Sunday School was organized in the school house and a revival was held with two graduate students of Oklahoma Baptist University which was then located in Blackwell on West College where the Washington School is today.

OBU was later moved to Shawnee, Okla., where it is today. During the revival three were converted. One was a man more than 80 years old,



LIBERTY ELEMENTARY was built in 1955 at a cost of \$470,205 by Frieda Wetzel.

## Liberty School Built To Serve Growing Western Population

Construction began on Liberty Elementary School, located at 505 West Liberty, in 1955. The site for the building was purchased in August of 1954, from Frieda Wetzel at a cost of \$470,205.

The Ponca City Board of Education decided that the development of a subdivision in that area would make another elementary school a must for Ponca City's continuing program of educational growth for its young people at that time.

According to The Pioneer, a monthly publication of the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce, "So great was the area's growth and the city's expansion that the ensuing baby boom brought on the need for two addition classrooms in 1963 and five classrooms in 1982. In 1959 a bungalow was moved in and converted into two badly needed classrooms."

The building was officially dedicated on Sunday, Dec. 2, 1956.

The program included singing from the Liberty Mixed Choir and Oklahoma City Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Chester Swanson was

the speaker. Three hundred and eighty-four students were registered for that first year with a faculty of 15. The first Liberty principal was Gene Pingleton.

General contractor for the building was A. J. Orr Construction Company and the architects were Timberlake and Kanady. The northeast addition was added to the building in 1963 and the northwest addition in 198, cumulating in the current 44,680 square foot building.

**Liberty Elementary Today**  
Liberty serves approximately 310 students in grades pre-k through fifth grade with a staff of 38. The mascot is the Leopard and their colors are blue and gold. Liberty's vision is "to be a safe environment nurturing the life-long learning and self esteem of each individual." Liberty has Meghan Bledsoe this year as its new principal.

Liberty Elementary schools' main goals are literacy, language development, and math. Liberty staff is committed to professional development and have received training in Literacy

First, Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math and other areas. All staff development at Liberty is tied to school improvement goals.

Liberty has a curriculum specialist who maintains a professional library to support teachers and provide them with staff development materials related to reading achievement.

The methods used to enhance reading include word walls, literacy centers, and grade-level collaborative teams.

Great Expectations and Character Development are important components in helping children succeed at Liberty. A character development program has been implemented in each grade level.

Liberty has been designated as a school-wide Title I school, which means all students, regardless of income or test scores, may receive Title I services. Title I programs provide materials and resources to focus on forming strong partnerships with parents, community and businesses to strengthen student performance.



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THE SECOND BUILDING to bear the name Roosevelt was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$72,659.65 at 815 East Highland Avenue.

## Roosevelt Elementary Originally on West Grand

The first building to bear the name Roosevelt was located at 613 East Grand Avenue. It contained the whole school system — elementary and high school. In 1929, more than a city block of ground was purchased.

On Jan. 30, 1931, the second building to bear the name Roosevelt was completed at a cost of \$72,659.65 at 815 East Highland Avenue. It was a buff brick building. In 1954, the addition to the building was made at a cost of \$24,065. In 1988, the annex was converted into classrooms.

In the 1960s, the Ponca City Garden Clubs furnished flower bulbs and the Camp Fire Girls earned points for planting them. For many years, East Junior High Athletic Department used the space under the north stairs as a change room because they practiced on the Roosevelt grounds.

The old Maintenance Building was constructed in 1957 on the north end of the Roosevelt Elementary property and comprised 3,762 square feet. In

1964, the annex was built and attached to the Old Maintenance Building to house food storage and carpenter/paint rooms.

In 1988, this 5,450-square-foot annex was remodeled into four classrooms. A blue metal building was purchased in 1990 from Marland School District and moved to Roosevelt's North side to house six large classrooms.

Principals who have served Roosevelt are Joe Hurt, Elizabeth E. Wright, Tom Hanes, J. Win Payne, Edna Thomas, Perry Pederson, David Shelton, Tom Sipe and Ronda Merrifield.

One U.S. Senator, a State Representative, and four mayors of Ponca City have attended Roosevelt along with many community leaders and leading businessmen.

As a part of the district's 2002 bond election, the Roosevelt building underwent a major remodel and addition in 2003. The extensive remodel added an additional 18,038 square feet to the building

and included repair/replacement of the roof, windows, new heating ventilation, air conditioning, ceiling tile, electrical upgrades including new lighting, remodeling of rest rooms, carpeting, remodeling of certain classrooms and converting the old gym into a media center and classrooms.

A new gymnasium/cafeteria and kitchen were added with connecting hallways to the existing building. The school was closed for two years for the renovation and reopened with an open house on April 3, 2005. The current building is 54,375 square feet.

Approximately 310 students in grades pre-k through fifth attend Roosevelt Elementary located at 815 East Highland. Ronda Merrifield is the school principal.

Roosevelt Elementary staff and students constantly pursue the spirit exhibited by President Theodore Roosevelt. The same spirit that carried him to greatness caused him to exceed all expectations by setting no limits.

## E.M. Trout Elementary School Honors Longtime Board Member

E. M. Trout Elementary School was named for Ernest Merrill Trout, who served on the Ponca City Board of Education beginning in 1929. He was the president of the Board from 1931 until he retired in 1965 after 34 years of service.

When E. M. Trout Elementary was built, Trout did not know that the other board members intended for the new school to be named after him.

Trout was surprised that his colleagues wanted to name the newly constructed school in honor of his hard work and dedication on behalf of the teachers and students of Ponca City.

The building consisted of 15 classrooms and an area floor space of 40,480 square feet. Total cost for the building in 1967 was \$631,887.03.

Under the direction of Principal Jack W. Hudack, the official building dedication was held on Sunday, Jan. 22, 1967, some 210 students and 11 staff members were present on that day in 1964. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Allen Robson, introduced the keynote speaker Dr. Garland Godfrey, President of Central State College in Edmond, Oklahoma.

This 9,100 square foot primary classroom addition made the total square

footage of the school 48,502 square feet. As a part of the district's 2002 bond election, Trout received a major renovation in 2003 adding six southwest classrooms and giving the building a new modern look. Portable buildings were added in the 1950's and 1991.

### E. M. Trout Elementary Today

With an enrollment of approximately 300 students, Trout Elementary has a vision to "provide each child with the inspiration and support to create personal vision."

Trout Elementary, under the direction of Principal Dawn Mills, is a Literacy First Phase IV school that focuses on literacy along with instructional practices to support and enhance academic achievement.

The goal of a phase IV school is to ensure all students are reading on or above grade level by the end of third grade.

Through staff development, Collaboration and on-going support, Trout's teachers ensure all students receive a balanced reading program that includes both decoding and comprehension skills. Classroom assessments drive instruction on a daily basis to create a learning environment that students, staff

and parents know is successful. Each class has a reading block and all students are assessed to determine their reading skill levels and needs. Phonological awareness, phonics, word study, fluency and comprehension skills are emphasized. Learning centers are created to reinforce literacy skills. Flexible skill grouping is implemented in each classroom.

A curriculum specialist has been hired with Federal Title I funds to ensure literacy and mathematics growth through in-class instructional modeling, lesson planning and assessment analysis. The curriculum specialist works to build Professional Learning Communities within each grade level.

Over the past four years, the staff, students and parents have celebrated the success of increasing student achievement.

This success is evident through state scores and rising Academic Performance Index scores. Trout was ranked number one of all schools in Oklahoma for three years in a row based on fifth grade test scores.

The data may be accessed via the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site at [www.just4kids.com](http://www.just4kids.com).



UNDER THE DIRECTION of Principal Jack W. Hudack, the official building dedication at E.M. Trout Elementary was held on Sunday, Jan. 22, 1967.

## Center School Began Shortly After the Run

**Editor's Note: The following was taken from the 1968 publication Newkirk and Kay County. The information was provided by Ruth Gasaway, Mutual Improvement Homemakers**

NEWKIRK — The first winter after the Cherokee Strip opened in September 1893, a subscription school was started west of Newkirk.

The next year Center School District No. 28 was built three miles west of the west side of Newkirk.

Every Friday afternoon a program of ciphering and a spelling contest was held, and visitors were welcome.

In the spelling match each side stood up in line on opposite sides of the room and the teacher pronounced words starting at the head of the line.

When one misspelled a word, he went to his seat and the word went to the head of the opposite line. Of course, each wanted to be the last to miss a word.

Ciphering was a similar contest except two worked at the blackboard on the same problem. It was good drill in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Always the last day of school was celebrated by the whole community enjoying a basket dinner and some entertainment depending on the weather.

By 1899 the school was so crowded, there weren't enough seats for all the pupils.

A Mr. White taught with 54 pupils in 48 seats.

Mary Livergood was a beginner that year and later taught at Center.

She cried the first day and Mr. White couldn't take it, so he sent her home.

He didn't return until the next school year.

In 1900 the school had five readers and a chart class.

Nearly every pupil took two years to get through a reader.

Beginners didn't get much attention except from the older pupils. We each had a slate and slate pencil. To clean it most of us spit on it and rubbed it with our sleeve. One girl was a sissy; she had a rag to clean her slate.

We seemed to learn, mostly by listening to the others recite.

In 1901 Mr. Emery was the teacher, the new beginners were considered the extras and had to sit wherever a spot was available.

The pupils came mostly from large families, usually three to six kids from a home. Each one seemed to have a special talent which generally showed up on his or her slate quite often.

Some could draw battle ships while others would design "leg of mutton" type dresses.

Many of the family names of these early 1900 Center School students are still in this area.

These memories were shared by members of the Livergood family and told to me while visiting Mary Livergood, who now resides in California.

## First School Bond Election Held in 1895

The first election for issuing school bonds was held July 24, 1895. It was for \$6,000 in seven percent bonds. There were 348 votes cast for it and 254 votes cast against it. With this money, a six-room stone school building was erected, between Sixth and Seventh streets on Grand Avenue, the location of the East Middle School today.

The Thursday, January 11, 1894, Courier tells of the very first school election. "On Saturday last the voters of school district number 71 met at 2:30 p.m. at the Ponca City school house, W. E. McGuire was chosen chairman of the meeting and also elected director of the district."

(See ELECTION, Page 9)

## Bethel

(Continued From Page 7)

Don't I remember you? You are Marvin Purdy, that's what I thought.

You attended school here when Miss Foster taught.

Say, that's one term I'll never forget Walter Marr now Don

Harris was not Teacher's pet.

Is that Harold Weigle, could that be Paul Dawe?

Only yesterday they were boys — now each are a "pa."

Are the Sears, Stockings and Whiteheads all here?

I want to see the old friends that I hold so dear,

And the Teachers, too, of the terms long gone by.

It seems only yesterday — but how time does fly!

Homecoming on earth is a wonderful time,

But some have gone on to a much fairer clime.

Albert Burkhalter and Nora Massey, Just this year, went on

To that greater homecoming in the celestial beyond.

We honor all those who have gone on before

To await God's homecoming day on that Heavenly shore.

So let us carry on here as Albert planned

And make Bethel Homecoming a day that is grand.

It was dedicated in honor of Albert Burkhalter (who start-

ed the Homecomings) and another former school girl, Nora (Massey) Gearhard.

After the fire, another building was built two miles from that location and named New Bethel. After losing the school, it was used by New Bethel E.H. Group for awhile but expenses became too high and the Elks bought the building from the Blackwell school board.

In 1968 the new Bethel E.H. Group were meeting in homes, and the community was still in existence.

Today the community does not exist and is just a memory to those who once went to school there.

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# Many Schools Scattered Throughout the Area

## Braden School District

After the Braden School District No. 27 annexed to the Ponca City Public Schools, the Ponca City Board of Education adopted a resolution at its regular meeting on Oct. 8, 1968, to give a Deed of Conveyance to the Braden Community Corporation, a non-profit corporation in Osage County.

This resolution was a result of a called meeting of the electors of the former Braden School District No. 27 at which an overwhelming majority of voters supported asking the Ponca City School District to give the building to the Braden patrons for a community center. The Center was also used as a voting site.

The Deed of Conveyance gave the two acres of land and the building to the Braden Community Corporation to use and to maintain. If the building is abandoned and not used for a period of one year as a Braden Community Center, the title will revert back to the Ponca City Public Schools.

## Enterprise School District No. 74

It is not known to current school staff when the Enterprise School District No. 74 became a part of the Ponca City Public School System.

The old wooden school building was on approximately one acre of land and was on the corner of the Kaw Lake Road east of Ponca City and Enterprise Road.

By a Ponca City Board of Education resolution dated April 5, 1971,

the board indicated its intent to give a quit claim deed to the Enterprise School District No. 74. The Enterprise Community Corporation came into existence on February 16, 1971, and received the deed.

As required by State Statute, if the building is abandoned and not used for a period of one year, the title will revert back to the Ponca City Public Schools.

## Finley School District No. 69

The Finley District Center was incorporated with the State of Oklahoma on May 24, 1971, for the purposes of serving as a community center. The Finley District No. 79 was somewhat unique in that its former students went to two independent school districts, Ponca City and Tonkawa.

The agreement with the Finley District Community Center was amended on Oct. 18, 1984, to allow a caretaker to place a mobile home on the property.

The Finley Dependent School District was officially annexed to Ponca City School District I-71 and Tonkawa School District I-87 on Oct. 2, 1970. Reports indicate that enrollment at Finley School was 98 Ponca City students and 22 Tonkawa students on Oct. 15, 1970.

On June 7, 1971, both Ponca City and Tonkawa Boards of Education approved an agreement with another party for Finley School to become the Finley District Community Center.

## Sunnyside School District

It is known that on Sept. 17, 1930, Ponca City schools purchased approximately two acres for \$200 from George and Eleanor Brett.

The purchase had a clause that would revert the property back to the owners if the school unit designated Sunnyside School was ever discontinued.

A survey by Joseph A. Williams shows a one story frame building, a two story frame building and a one story brick building. Also shown on the July 17, 1931, Sunnyside survey is a barn and two latrines on a two-plus acre tract.

An agreement approved and signed March 24, 1942, stated in part, "... Promise and agree that the cessation of school at the aforesaid "Sunnyside School" from and after the date hereof and to and including the 15th day of September 1940.

## Cross School

Cross became a part of the Ponca City School system in 1927 located at 606 South Fourth Street.

During the first two years after the settling of the Cherokee Strip, the rivalry between Cross and Ponca City was intense and both knew that one must give way and pass out of the picture. Cross had the early advantages, but the progressive city spirit of Ponca City was gradually forging ahead.

One day the mayor, B. S. Barnes, conceived the idea of inducing someone in Cross to move his home to

Ponca City and in this manner start combining the two towns.

A pair of lots was selected at 606 South Fourth Street. L. S. Barnes stated, "Our boosters worked out a plan with George Chrisman, a house mover, whereby preparations were made to start moving the house after dark one Saturday evening. This precaution was taken so it would be impossible to obtain a court injunction before Monday morning. The men, after tearing out the foundation in the still of the night, placed beams and rollers under the house and it started on its way to its new home. It was necessary for the men to work quietly and without lights so that the neighbors would not learn of the move and attempt to block it."

"When morning came, the house was nearly outside the city and the alarm spread around Cross like wild fire. The people of that city were up in arms. The workmen were threatened, but they paid no attention and continued to work all day Sunday. The man in charge, carrying a shotgun, let it be known that anyone who interfered with the moving of the house would be endangering his life. The men continued to move the house over the broad farm land until nightfall, when the house rested on the outer edge of Ponca City. No work was done that evening, but men guarded the house throughout the night, and early Monday morning it was moved to the lots selected on

South Fourth Street." — The Last Run

## Peters School

The district has no records at all of the old Peters School.

According to Dr. Nancy Niemann, assistant superintendent of human resources and finance for the school district, "The school was located in the Osage six miles south of old Highway 60 on Old River road (also know today as 80 Road and Old River Road — also called Glascock Road). We currently own the land where the old Peters School was located. The school was in operation from approximately the 1920s until 1960s. The building was built by the WPA and stones from the first high school that burned were used in the construction of Peters School. Peters School burned during the 1960s and only a few stones remain on that location today."

According to Weny Milligan, administrative secretary for Ponca City schools, "I attended Peters School in grades two through five from 1947 through 1950. It was a one-room school house that included all grades. My teacher was Mrs. Drummond. There were two outside toilets — one for boys and one for girls."

The Ponca City School District would appreciate any additional information and/or memories about Peters School that people in the community would like to share with the district to help create an accurate, permanent history.

## Washington Elementary School Originally Called Cross Elementary

Washington Elementary School had its beginnings as a school called Cross Elementary.

The red brick building at Detroit and Fifth became part of the Ponca City School System shortly after Ponca City won the battle over the railroad station and post office. Pearl Irvin was the principal in 1936 when growth made it possible to expand by adding two new classrooms.

J. Win Payne and Joe Johnson followed Irvin as the next principals of the first Washington School.

The fourth grade through sixth grade teacher, who was hired in the fall of 1935, was Madelle Hoffman who became the first principal following the death of Johnson and had a staff of 16 people. Miss Hoffman stayed in that position from 1945-52, except for the one year when she was an exchange teacher in Great Britain. Eva Smiley took her place for that year.

Retired Principal Madelle

Hoffman was cited in an article in The Ponca City News saying, "It was August 1935, and I, a Kansan, had come to Ponca City to teach. I was assigned to a little red brick building with four rooms over a gym on the corner of Fifth and Detroit. The name "CROSS" was carved on the white block above the front door. We were so far in the country that we could hear cows moo and rooster's crow. Since the streets were not paved on Detroit and Sixth, our cars were stuck in the mud when it rained. We jokingly gave our address as Sixtieth and Plowed Ground."

"When local enrollment went down, children were bused from Ranch Drive, The American Legion Home, and the Indian community south of Ponca City. In 1952, we moved into the new Washington School on North Seventh. Although we'd looked forward to this event for many years, there was sadness in parting from the little red

schoolhouse that was filled with memories of fun, sharing, tears, problems and joy for almost two decades."

In 1952, the present Washington School at 1615 North Seventh Street was completed. The official building dedication was held on Nov. 16, 1952. Superintendent of Schools, J. Win Payne, introduced the keynote speaker Dr. J. R. Rackley, Dean of College of Education, University of Oklahoma.

In just a few years both Washington Schools were put to use to accommodate the large increase in enrollment which swelled to 713. When more new schools were built, the first Washington School was remodeled and became Bi-State Mental Health Foundation.

Madelle Hoffman served the two Washington Schools as principal from 1945-1952 and 1952-1978. Miss Hoffman retired in 1978, and Tom Sipe became the new principal.

(See WASHINGTON, Page 11)



IN 1952, the present Washington School at 1615 North Seventh Street was completed. The official building dedication was held on Nov. 16, 1952.

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THE OLD high school building is pictured.

## First Lutheran School a Goal Set by Church's Constitution

"Shortly after President Grover Cleveland issued a proclamation on Aug. 19, 1893, declaring that the Cherokee Strip would be opened for settlement, devout Christians from every part of the country were among the first dwellers in the new land." These words were written by A. E. Berhrend, pastor of First Lutheran Church from 1949 to 1975.

The story of First Lutheran Church and School is the story of devoted Christians and a gracious God. It is the story of growth and blessing, and a continued commitment to Christian discipleship.

First Lutheran Church began with seven charter members writing a church constitution on Feb. 5, 1925. The members met in homes until the first sanctuary was built in 1934. Nineteen members of FLC signed the mortgage note for \$10,000.

A new sanctuary was dedicated in 1976. Featuring stained glass windows that tell the story of God's redeeming work on earth, the building has been home to Sunday morning worship services at 8:30 and 11 a.m. weekly as well as other festival services throughout

the year. Today, First Lutheran Church has a membership of approximately 700 people.

### School in Early Plans

Included in the first constitution of the church was a commitment to start a Christian dayschool. Twenty-five years later the membership built a school facility with four classrooms, an office, and a full basement which was dedicated in 1953. That first year, classes were held for kindergarten and first grade with an enrollment of 40 students.

The school added a second wing of four more classrooms in 1958. The Freida Wetzel Memorial Auditorium was constructed in 1961, filling in the "U" shape of the school and providing a great place for basketball, talent shows, P.E., sockhops, school plays, and many other activities.

In the '60s the school continued to grow with an enrollment of around 250. At that time, FLS had six classes of kindergartners. In 1971 public schools began to offer kindergarten programs and First Lutheran added its first pre-kindergarten. A pre-school program for three-year-olds was started in 1982.

In 1991, the school razed the "wood building out back" and replaced it with an annex of three new rooms.

These rooms housed a day-care, the sixth grade, and a brand new computer lab with 10 computers.

The building continued in 1994 when FLCS added a new middle school classroom building to house grades six, seven and eight. That project included an updated computer lab with 25 computers. In 1998 a full time, dedicated computer teacher was added to the staff.

FLS has an enrollment this year of about 250 students pre-school through eighth grade.

Most recently, FLCS has completed a \$2.5 million building project which added three new buildings — a six-room classroom building to house grades two through five and the computer lab, an administration building which includes the school library and a new kitchen and cafeteria building.

Throughout the years, First Lutheran Church and School has prayed that their work in Ponca City would glorify God and bless our community through Christian education.

## Woodlands Celebrates 50 Years

Woodlands Elementary opened in 1957 at 2005 East Woodland Road with 336 students and 15 staff members. The building was officially dedicated on Tuesday, Nov. 5, 1957.

The program started with school board chairman C. W. Rohler. The Senior High Girls Octet, under the direction of Jean Walker, provided special music for the event. The invocation was given by Dr. Arthur C. Young, First Presbyterian Church of Ponca City. The president of the board, E. M. Trout, made the formal presentation of the building.

Superintendent of Schools J. Win Payne introduced the keynote speaker who was Dr. V. R. Easterling, president of Northern Oklahoma Junior College in Tonkawa. An addition in 1966 brought the total square footage of Woodlands to 42,673 square feet.

Woodlands today serves approximately 325 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Principal Carla Fry leads Woodlands 35 staff members.

The mighty eagle is Woodlands' mascot and the school colors are royal blue and white. The vision of Woodlands is to be a team creating tomorrows. The mission statement is "to ensure all children develop and demonstrate academic, social, and personal skills essential for the creation of a better tomorrow."

At Woodlands, assessment drives instruction. Staff utilizes test data to build on

strengths and identify weaknesses. Their main goal is to have every student reading on grade level. Woodlands Building Level Team keeps everyone focused on their vision, mission and goals. All teachers received training in Literacy First Phase I and II.

Literacy is woven into all the subjects. Woodlands Elementary implements the tenets of Great Expectations and was the first school to become a Great Expectations school in Ponca City. The www.calm morning assemblies serve as an exemplary model of Great Expectations' practices for high expectations. In addition to GE, teachers integrate Character First principles into their curriculums.

Reading and math are the major focus at Woodlands, where students receive quality instruction and are rewarded for their independent accomplishments. The Tag-It program rewards individual reading goals. Accelerated Reader is also used to allow students to accumulate points toward their goals. Renaissance Math has been added to the math curriculum. This individualized program allows students to master district power standards at their own pace.

Woodlands shares a multi-cultural partnership with Cultural Kaleidoscope in which ambassadors from Russia, Ireland, Australia and other countries share their culture with students.



FIRST LUTHERAN Church built a school facility with four classrooms, an office, and a full basement which was dedicated in 1953. That first year, classes were held for kindergarten and first grade with an enrollment of 40 students. The school added a second wing of four more classrooms in 1958. The Freida Wetzel Memorial Auditorium was constructed in 1961, filling in the "U" shape of the school.

## Union Broke 21-Year Drought

Union Elementary opened its doors in August of 1987 at 2617 North Union. The \$1.8 million buff brick building had 53,444 square feet and was designed to accommodate handicapped students.

The building was built to accommodate some students who had previously attended Jefferson Elementary which had been found to be unsafe in 1985. The Jefferson Elementary school site was too small to allow a k-6 building to meet required building codes for student space.

In addition, the board felt that the northwest portion of the community was expanding.

The 30 acres on north Union were purchased for \$155,629 to build the first new school in the community since Trout was built in 1964.

For two years (1985-86) most of Jefferson Elementary students were housed in a temporary school located at the

Mertz Instruction Center on west U.S. 60 until Union was completed. Some of the Jefferson students attended Old Lincoln which had additional classrooms constructed on the southeast side to accommodate these additional students.

Later in 2003, three classrooms were added that doubled as tornado shelters and this added 3,800 square feet at a cost of \$505,172. The district received a FEMA grant that helped pay for part of this construction.

Currently, under the direction of Principal Shelley Arrott, Union's 49 staff members are providing a quality education for approximately 360 students, 3-year-olds through fifth grade.

In the fall of 2005, Union Elementary was honored as a National Title I Distinguished School. This prestigious award was given to 53 Title I schools across the nation for out-

standing student performance for two or more consecutive years.

A Curriculum Specialist, hired with Title I funds, meets with teachers weekly in professional learning communities to ensure literacy and math growth through in-class instructional modeling, lesson planning, assessment analysis, teacher collaboration and the writing of grade level goals that target areas for growth.

In 2006-2007, Union Elementary began focusing on making fitness part of the learning process. The Bulldog Jog, a track in the shape of a paw print, was built for students to begin making exercise a part of their lifestyle so they can become better students. Students walk laps prior to each recess and then have the opportunity to participate in The Mileage Club once per week. Paw print awards are presented to those students walking a mile each week.

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# School . . . . .

(Continued From Page 6)

Each morning the sliding doors of the school building were pushed aside and the opening exercises were held for both rooms together. An excellent start toward a library was begun, 30 or 40 volumes being acquired mostly by donation, and included a complete set of Encyclopedia Britannica presented by the school board.

The first graduating class of the high school finished at the close of the last term in May 1895. It consisted of two persons, Stanley McKinnon and Dora Smith. The graduating class of May 1896, had two students, Mrs. Lola White Johnston and Sidney Creveling.

For the first time the eighth grade of Kay County had graduation exercises. These and the high school commencement were held together when Mr. Bion Hutchins was the superintendent.

The salary for teachers was \$40 a month and for custodians it was \$35 per month. The school census of 1903 showed 1,312 persons of school age. The total expense for running the school in 1902 was \$7,113.41.

In 1902, for the first time, Ponca City had a three year high school. In 1905, bonds were issued for a small brick building on the north side of Grand Avenue. The high school was housed in this building until 1911, when a gray stone building was built on the East Junior High School site. In 1907, Ponca

City High School became a four-year high school with two courses of studies, classical and scientific.

The Po-Hi Class of 1908 was the first class to graduate from the four-year Ponca City High School. This class held its 70th reunion on Sept. 27, 1978, and two class members, Dr. Cad W. Arrendell and Clair A. Nickles, and the principal, W.L. Roach, were able to attend. Four other members sent greetings. There were 14 total graduates that year.

The Po-Hi Class of 1958 honored the class of 1908 which was invited to be seated in places of honor at commencement. All but one of the 14 graduates were living at the time.

The Po-Hi Class of 1928 was the first class to be graduated from the high school at Fifth and Overbrook. The new building was finished at mid-term and on Jan. 26, 1928, the students moved from the old high school at Grand and Sixth to the new building.

From 1911 until 1928 the old gray, vine-covered building, later used for the junior high school and replaced by the present East Middle School building, was the home of the high school.

In 1928, 20 years after the organization of the four-year high school in Ponca City, a student body of 500 and a faculty of 22 teachers entered the main building on the present campus as the senior high school.

The cost of this building was \$330,000. In 1946, this building was named the Charles P. Howell Building in memory of Mr. Howell who was the principal from 1929-1935 and superintendent from 1936-1946.

In 1935, the Industrial Education Building was added, then Blaine Park Stadium, in 1937. The field house was added in 1939.

In 1955, additions to all three buildings were completed. These included a three-story addition to the Howell Building, an addition to the Industrial Arts Building, a new girls' gymnasium and the bleachers on the south side of the football field.

Increased enrollment had brought about the need of additional classroom space. The new classroom building included space for 13 classrooms and new quarters for the high school cafeteria. It was air-conditioned so that most of the summer school classes could be held in it.

Another new building was built in 1961, named in honor of Homer S. Anderson, principal of the high school from 1936-1965. This building included a cafeteria which seated 400 people. In 1968, the stadium was again enlarged to its present seating capacity of 9,200. In 1975, two more buildings were erected: the Fine Arts building and Robson Fieldhouse. A dressing room next to Sullins Stadium was constructed in 1977.



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC Church opened a parish school in 1901 staffed by the Divine Providence Sisters from San Antonio, Texas. St. Mary's School continues to educate boys and girls from preschool to eighth grade.

# St. Mary's Survives Challenges

Droughts. Floods. Great Depression. Dust Bowl. Oil field boom and busts. St. Mary's Catholic Church and parishioners have been part of all these challenges and opportunities.

Soon after the opening of the Cherokee Strip, September 1893, a Benedictine priest from Sacred Heart, Okla.,

Fr. Felix DeGrasse, came to Ponca City to offer Mass in various Catholic homes.

The first Eucharist celebrated in the first completed church was March 17, 1894 and dedicated by Bishop Theophile Meerschaert on March 27, 1894 as St. Felix's ... later changed to St. Mary's.

A parish school was opened in 1901, staffed by the Divine Providence Sisters from San Antonio, Texas.

Today all teachers are laity. During these 106 years it has educated thousands of Native Americans and white.

Among the many who went through the school are Mike McGraw, O.S.U. Men's Golf Coach; U.S. Sen. Don Nickles, Dan Piraro, daily contributor to Ponca City News comic strip "Bizarro"; Mike Boettcher, NBC News commentator, Melvin Coffman, University of Colorado Final 4, 1955; Sr. Frances Solana, St. Joseph Hospital Nurse and many others.

Today St. Mary's has 860 registered families with two priests, Fr. Michalicka and Fr. Konkala, and a fourth-year theology seminarian in residence, Joe Schwarz.

St. Mary's School continues to educate boys and girls from preschool to eighth grade.

The tradition of excellence in its academic background continues to be expressed in student integration in Ponca City High School classes and programs. Each year St. Mary's small classes have excelled in the local high school.

St. Mary's, through her guilds and organizations, offers various forms of community service and parish services.

The Adult Religious education programs vary from Enrichment religious education, Bible Study groups to the Journey of Faith about the rich heritage and tradition of the Catholic Faith.

The Hispanic Ministry flourishes through the Eucharist and the Sacraments. There are many new residents in fellowship and worship.

St. Mary's Youth Ministry continues to enrich and challenge its teenagers from Confirmation classes to various service projects.

This year more than 50 youths from St. Mary's joined 4,300 other Catholic Youth in a regional youth conference.

# Election . . . . .

(Continued From Page 8)

Jas. S. Hutchins was elected clerk and P.I. Brown, treasurer of the district, and the four school reservations on the town plat were chosen as sites for future school buildings.

A resolution was passed directing and empowering the board to lease purchase or construct a building for immediate use, with the understanding that it may remain temporarily upon one of the city reservations. It is expected that they will lease and eventually buy the present building which is now owned and controlled by about a dozen gentlemen who advanced the money (some \$700) to complete the same."

A second bond election was held Aug. 11, 1899, for \$4,000 with 46 votes cast, all in favor. These were six percent bonds. This money was to build an addition to the school. The old frame building had been on the block all these years, used

as an overflow.

The board of education voted to cut the old frame house as nearly in half as possible, giving the front part to the new territory on the northwest of Ponca City that had just been taken into the school district and the rear half to be moved to a school reserve to be used for the colored children.

This was located at the 600 block on South Sixth Street (Attucks School). J. W. Lynch gave one lot and the school board paid \$50 for another for this location. This was in 1901.

In 1905 bonds were issued for \$18,000. There were 323 votes for this and 72 against it. With this money the Roosevelt building on the north side of Grand Avenue was built. Part of this building is still in use today.

The old Junior High School stone building was erected in 1911, remodeled in 1923 and condemned in 1938. The new

Junior High School was finished and put into service in 1939. The oldest ward school, Lincoln, was built in 1915

**Recent Bond Elections**  
1988 — \$4 million (Yes vote — Dr. Larry Robinson, Superintendent)

1992 — \$7 million (No — Wynona Winn, Superintendent)

1995 — \$7 million (Yes — Dr. Bill White, Superintendent)

1996 — \$3 million (Yes — Dr. Bill White, Superintendent)

1997 — \$3.5 million (Yes — Dr. Bill White, Superintendent)

1999 — \$5.25 million (Yes — Dr. Bill White, Superintendent)

2000 — \$2.75 million (Yes — Dr. Bill White, Superintendent)

2002 — \$16.5 million (Yes — Dr. Bill White, Superintendent)

2007 — \$13.5 million (Yes — Dr. David Pennington, Superintendent)

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**Debbie Robinson**  
Director of Finance

# Attucks

(Continued From Page 21)

The Attucks Elementary School was the only school in the Ponca City School district that offered a regular state approved hot lunch program. The program was in operation when it was a complete separate school and continued after it became just another elementary school.

For the school year 1964-65, there were 52 African-American students enrolled at the junior high and 30 at the senior high.

At that time, there were only two African-American families that lived outside of the southeast corner of Ponca City. One was the family of James J. West, principal at Attucks Elementary School. He joined the faculty of the Ponca City Schools in 1946 and was principal of the Attucks Separate School prior to integration.

The other family lived next door to him and their chil-

dren attend the Lutheran Parochial School. In September 1964, this family elected to have their children attend the public schools. They enrolled in Garfield Elementary School and attend for the a full year.

The plan said, "This office has received no complaints from any parents or children because of the two colored children attending there (Garfield School)."

Attucks Elementary had a total enrollment of 126 for the 1964-65 school year. They had six and a half teachers (six full-time, one-half-time) and a non-teaching principal. They had a teacher-pupil ratio of 19.3 students per teacher.

According to the Plan of Integration, "In order to achieve district balance and avoid overcrowding, the local Board of Education has seen fit to make changes in some of the boundary lines

for each of the elementary school area. It appears that at that time, school boundaries were redesigned, to include the 'colored' area of town and all elementary school children attended school according to new boundaries set."

The policy adopted by the Board of Education said, "The policy will continue to be one that will allow for complete integration with only geographic factors to act as deterrents. We shall strive to maintain district balance, avoid overcrowding, consider safety factors, provide staff integration as qualified colored teachers become available, provide transportation where necessary and conform to the present Board of Education policy, and above all, maintain a program of education for all children regardless of race, color, religion or national origin."

# More Facts About Attucks School

One of the oldest schools in Ponca City was Attucks, located at, Madison Avenue and South Twelfth Street.

Its beginning was in a building rented from the Rock Island Lumber Company in 1904.

It was next housed in a frame structure located on the site of the present Administration Building, according to the November 1963 edition of The Pioneer, a monthly publication of the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce.

In June of 1906, before statehood, the Board of Education recommended to the county that a building in the 700 block in South Sixth be purchased and used as a separate school.

In September 1925, this location was exchanged for a strip of land 160 feet wide and 671 feet long, south of Lansing Avenue, between Twelfth and Fourteenth Streets.

The first section of the building was built in the fall of 1926 for \$13,996.11. In April

1928, the second addition was built at a cost of \$9,887.48, and included the first auditorium.

In 1936, the third addition was finished for \$37,282.01. The work done in 1936 consisted of remodeling the auditorium into classrooms and building a new auditorium and shop room.

The library, science room and offices were completed in 1937, costing \$10,981.50. In August of 1937, a frame bungalow, the home economics cottage, was remodeled for \$2,636.84. It had been built in 1933 for \$3,243.72.

Also in 1937, a bath house and swimming pool were built at a cost of \$7,188.69.

It is reported that one of Ponca City's biggest fires gutted the north section of the building in January 1945.

The burned portion was remodeled that same year at a cost of about \$50,000, of which \$29,000 was insurance money.

Attucks school closed in 1966.

# West

(Continued From Page 31)

There were five toilet rooms for boys, five for girls, as well as four faculty restrooms, all finished with ceramic tile. There was also a faculty lounge.

Heat was provided by a hot water system, housed in the large boiler room and fresh air was constantly routed to all rooms which are each thermostatically controlled. There were seven custodian and service rooms.

## Fierce Rivals

East and West Junior High Schools were fierce rivals in sports and every other areas in the days when they both had seventh, eighth and ninth grade students. Students in those grades who lived on the West side of the railroad tracks attended West Middle School and students on the East side of the tracks attended East Junior High.

In 1996, only seventh and eighth grade students went to West. In 2000, the district changed West Middle School to house sixth and seventh grade students and East Middle School housed 8th grade students.

In 2000 the inner courtyard was converted into a media center and computer classroom. The cafeteria was expanded and other remodeled. In 2002 six additional classrooms were added to the south side of the building for a total of 111,621 square feet.

## West Middle School Today

Still located at 1401 West Grand Avenue, West Middle

School currently serves approximately 730 sixth and seventh grade students. With the passage of a \$12 million bond issue, West Middle School looks somewhat different with the addition of two classrooms, renovation of the auditorium, and additional technology in the classrooms, a new roof and new HVAC units.

Under the leadership of Principal Barbara Cusick, West Middle School's vision is to be an innovative, nurturing, supportive environment, which promotes positive self-concept and ensures academic success.

The school is team oriented with teams of teachers from the core areas serving groups of students within each grade. Team teaching fosters student learning, creativity, and potential in a cooperative atmosphere by keeping students in one group.

Required courses are English, reading, science, social studies and math.

Students can choose from a wide range of exploratory classes including physical education, art, keyboarding, technology education, health and nutrition, Spanish, sewing and crafts, band, orchestra and chorus.

Other opportunities include accelerated courses, special education, Title I programs, Title VII tutoring, guidance and counseling services.

The main focus at West is to enhance student's reading and math abilities. Early identification of students needing intervention is critical to middle school staff in order to provide

appropriate interventions.

The reading lab, phonics, fluency and spelling interventions are provided for all students reading below grade level. The number of students reading below grade level has decreased drastically with these targeted interventions.

Students working below grade level in math receive intervention in the math class and math lab.

Parental involvement is growing at West Middle School. During the 2006-2007 school year student led conferences replaced the traditional parent-teacher conference. Parent participation at Back-to-School Night, student led conferences, vocal and instrumental productions was excellent.

Students at West Middle School are recognized in a variety of ways including; recognition of faculty, principal and superintendent honor roll recipients, monthly POWER award winners, weekly SOAR recognition, top readers, Presidential Academic Excellence, Presidential Academic Achievement, and attendance awards.

Much of the historical information on Ponca City Public Schools had to be recreated because some historical files and information were thrown away several years ago. If you find something incorrect in these articles, please contact Mary Ladd, community relations coordinator, at 767-8000, ext. 215.

# East

(Continued From Page 31)

Quite a long time passed and still no lights. The junior high orchestra filled in the lag time by playing a couple of unrehearsed numbers, one being 'Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here.'

In 1939, the school board had to make a decision as whether to build East Junior High. The board had faced a similar decision a few years before because of the condemnation of part of Jefferson School. The complete cost for the facility was \$441,000.

When East Junior High first opened, Mr. Merle P. Long was president of the school board and here are some of his remarks that he made at the building dedication ceremony. "This open house marks another milestone in the development of Ponca City. It is a time of rejoicing. It is the first time since 1920 that all school children of Ponca City have been housed in adequate buildings."

"In looking at the past, I came upon a quote from the longest reigning principal of the five principals that led the school for the last 50 years. Mr. Ralph Lester, whom the East Auditorium is now named after, led East from 1932 until 1966 and his statement, has meaning even today as we head into the 21st century. 'We must set our standards high, work hard, lead the way, and follow no one who cannot offer us something better than we know.'"

The new building followed the modern trend in architecture, and was built with a four front appearance to give a pleasing view from each side. It had two floors with an overall size of 268 feet from east to west and 216 feet from north to south. The general plan of the building consisted of three

parallel units with a central connecting wing through which runs the main corridor. There were two double duty stairways in the central wing with the outside units being provided with one each. The auditorium lies in the north half of the central unit.

Modern in design, finished in pastel colors, with artistic drapes and curtains, new stage properties, and improved lighting effects, this auditorium had true distinction. Its seating capacity is 1,400.

The south half of the central unit houses the gymnasium which features an electrically controlled folding door to provide two divisions for boys' and girls' physical education classes. Running longitudinally is a spacious exhibition court bordered on either side with gym seats of the telescopic recessed type having five movable rows capable of accommodating 800 spectators.

The four shops, the two home economics rooms, the study hall, the library, the cafeteria, and the 32 classrooms are ideally arranged. The administrative offices were located on the ground floor of the west unit. The Principal's office had a microphonic type of public address system with a talk-back feature which reaches to one or all locations in the building. This sound unit had a phonographic connection and was also radio equipped. The building was equipped with electric time clocks and buzzers, automatic turnoff feature on the lavatories, and student lockers with built-in combination locks. Bicycle racks were built to accommodate 200 bicycles. They were all steel construction set in concrete with a chain for locking each bicycle in place.

The Ponca City Junior High

School took the name East Junior High School in 1961 when a second junior high school, West Junior High School, was built on the west side of town to relieve the increased enrollment at the Ponca City Junior High School. Both schools housed seventh, eighth and ninth grade students using the railroad tracks as the dividing line. Students living east of the tracks attended East Junior High and students living west of the tracks attended West Junior High.

East Middle School Today East Middle School's approximately 45 faculty and staff members have the same dedication and loyalty to public education as the pioneers who built the first school on this site, 612 East Grand, just two months after the opening of the Cherokee Strip on Nov. 16, 1893. Three school buildings preceded the current building constructed in 1939.

East Middle School houses approximately 400 eighth grade students each year. Principal Barbara Davis, Assistant Principal Paul McQueen, Counselor Elaine Thomas, and the staff are committed "to ensure a foundation for lifelong learning and responsible living by providing an academically strong, stable, and nurturing environment."

The mascot is the Wildcat and school colors are red and blue.

As a Title I school, East provides additional support in reading and math. An intervention program called Halftime promotes student achievement by providing students with additional time to complete assignments and receive instructional help.

Also, the "C" or above grading policy in core courses promotes higher academic expectations for student learning and achievement.

*From one centenarian to another:*



*1901 - 2007*



*St. Mary's Catholic School  
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