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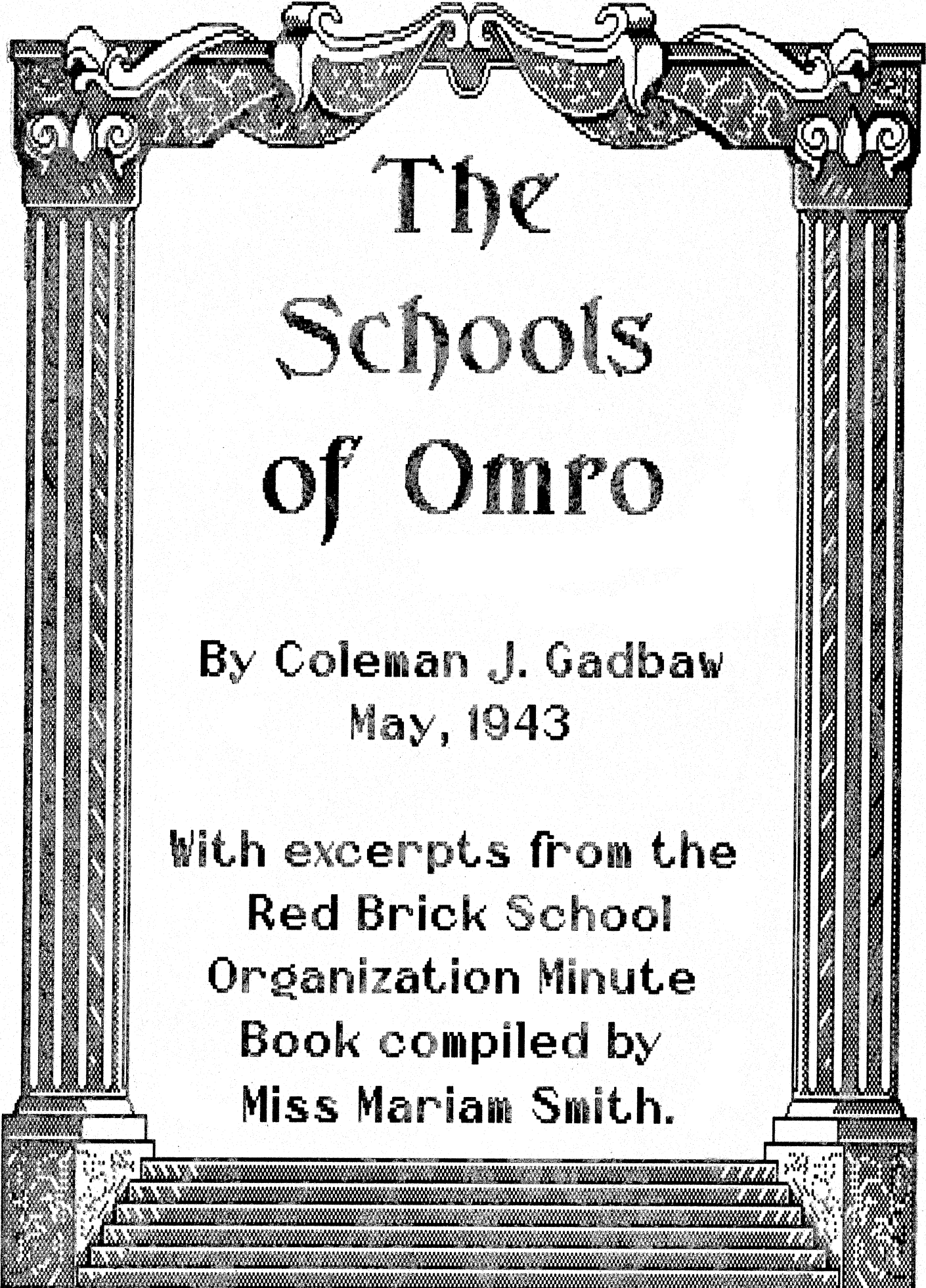
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# The Schools of Ompo

By Coleman J. Gadbow  
May, 1943

With excerpts from the  
Red Brick School  
Organization Minute  
Book compiled by  
Miss Mariam Smith.

THE SCHOOLS  
OF  
OMRO, WISCONSIN

An historical study of the development of education  
in a typical Wisconsin community

Coleman J. Gadbaw

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education at  
Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin  
May 1943.

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A debt of gratitude for a deeper appreciation and more thorough understanding of education is hereby tendered to Dr. R. B. Thiel of the Lawrence College Faculty, under whose skillful guidance this thesis was written.

Mr. H. B. Patch has been a reservoir of information, always willing to draw from his rich experiences as principal of the Omro High School. For the past twenty-six years he has wisely guided the destinies of the students and community alike in a commendable manner.

A special work of recognition is hereby given Mr. Ralph J. Lemke, Omro for his photographic work, and mounting them to be used in this thesis.

By her patient encouragement and assistance in the preparation of this thesis, my wife, Dorothy, has given measureless assistance. As a result, the task has been completed with a reasonable degree of satisfaction, and with the hope that it will be of interest and profit to the reader.



## SCOPE AND FINDINGS

This is an historical study of the development of education in a typical Wisconsin community from 1848 to 1943. For the most part original sources were used as the basis for PART I THE SCHOOLS, which describes the various buildings erected for educational purposes.

PART II THE CURRICULUM AND ITS ADMINISTRATORS tells of the changes made in the course of study, and about some of the men who served as principals of the schools. The impact of their personality appears to be the greatest influence in the lives of the students who attended the schools.

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## KINDLING THE FLAME

Omro, coterminous with School District Number Five in the Town of Omro, is a village of fourteen hundred persons in the central portion of Winnebago County in southeastern Wisconsin. The community was settled a century ago by the second expanding wave of American migrants attracted to the state, this time by its fertile soil and wooded hills. The first group had been the miners in the southwestern part of the state a few years earlier. Saw and shingle mills were soon erected to capitalize on the wealth of virgin timber which supplied the building materials for the growing farms and nearby cities. Enterprising citizens in 1857 subscribed ninety thousand dollars, a substantial sum for that time, for the extension of a railroad into Omro. As a result, other industries were established, among which were a foundry, a glass, and a casket factory. These industries gradually discontinued operations as the tide of the timber industry moved onward, but Omro continued to flourish as a trading center for the farmers who remained to become leaders in the production of livestock, butter and cheese. This is its status today. Improved means of transportation have enabled many wage earners to commute to nearby Oshkosh, and at the same time,

enjoy the pleasant surroundings of a typical community.

Among those in the vanguard of these settlers were some of the writer's ancestors. Their tales and anecdotes were his initiation to local lore, and created an interest in historical matters. Attendance at some of the biennial sessions of the Old Red Brick Association aroused his interest in the early schools of the community. He has listened intently as these men and women paid glowing tribute to the local schools of their generation. As a teacher in the Omro High School for the past fifteen years, the writer has sometimes wondered "What will the testimony of the present day graduates be a half century from now?" Thus, in nebular form existed the subject of this thesis when he enrolled in the Graduate Course in Education at Lawrence College three years ago. As his understanding and appreciation of educational matters has increased, so did his desire to write this paper.

Omro has been considered as a typical subject for study because its industrial and social development can be duplicated in many other Wisconsin communities. Educationally, it has been fortunate to have had men of vision and practicality associated with its development. The community has always tried to provide adequate facilities for more than the minimum essentials in education. Vocational and academic branches have shared alike in a degree equaled by few Wisconsin communities of

comparable size.

This is not intended to be a contrasting study between the old and the new schools. Rather, it is presented simply as an historical study of the continuous development of education in a typical Wisconsin community. PART I THE SCHOOLS is the story of the buildings which the community erected to meet the changing demands of a growing village. PART II THE CURRICULUM AND ITS ADMINISTRATORS describes the curriculum and matters relating to its changes and development. Finally, an attempt has been made to present some of the outstanding characteristics of the men who were the administrators of the schools during nearly a century of settlement. Their personal contributions stand out as the single greatest influence in the lives of the hundreds of students who have attended the Omro schools.

In several instances original records of School District Number Five, the Village and Town of Omro, have been available for study. They are bound volumes in the safe keeping of the proper authorities. Complete files of THE OMRO HERALD beginning with 1894 were made accessible for reference by Mr. F. A. Siebensohn, Publisher. A number of lifetime residents related interesting experiences which initiated new points for further study. Mr. Nile J. Behncke, Curator of the Oshkosh Public Museum, has assembled historical materials in the reference li-



brary, which are invaluable to one engaged in historical research. A perusal of these sources has added greatly to the knowledge of local history. Furthermore, the pattern of the development of education in Wisconsin has become more apparent. The quest for knowledge is eternal.

## PART. I THE SCHOOLS

### CHAPTER I

#### EARLY BEGINNINGS

The freedoms attendant in a democracy require a reciprocal concern for their perpetuation. The founders of America, inspired by the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence, set forth the framework of a government designed to operate on democratic principles. An education is the vehicle which is essential to the successful continuation of such a noble undertaking. Although the constitution itself is silent about education, the Continental Congress, sitting in New York the same year that memorable document was evolved in 1787, enunciated in its now famous Northwest Ordinance the fundamentals which have attended the expansion of our nation when it said, "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged." Again it said, "There shall be reserved the lot (section) number sixteen of every township for the maintenance of public schools within the said township." Under the impetus of a generous land policy the regions covered by the ordinance were rapidly occupied by families inspired by the ideals of "free schools,

free lands and free churches to make free men." Thus it was that Wisconsin, contained within the territory included in this outstanding declaration, became the home of American pioneers and European immigrants in the decades following 1820.

The waterway of the Fox River in eastern Wisconsin which had been extensively used by the French explorers and *cour de bois* now offered easy access to a fertile country awaiting development. To the west of Lake Winnebago in the county of the same name lies territory described by an early writer in these glowing terms:

"The Town of Omro, situated in the central part of the county is one of the finest agricultural districts in the habitable world. The face of the country is undulating and indescribably beautiful, the elevations affording distant views of the most picturesque scenery.

The soil is a rich dark loam of the greatest fertility, varied with occasional areas of rich clay soil. The base is limestone rock and the subsoil is a snuff-colored clay, impregnated with particles of disintegrated limestone.

There is a very small amount of waste land in the town, the interval land being the best of meadows. The country was originally openings, with the exceptions of small tracts in the northern part of the town, which were forest lands, and the bottom land on the margin of the Fox River."<sup>1</sup>

The Federal Government, strangely enough, undertook to establish formal education in this virgin country before the first permanent American settlers arrived!

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1. Richard J. Harney, History of Winnebago County, Allen and Hicks, Oshkosh, 1880, p. 294.

In 1834, in fulfillment of a treaty made in 1831 with the Menominee Indians, Winnebago Rapids (known to us today as Neenah) was selected as the site for the government agency. Here were to be erected saw and grist mills, along with thirty-three log houses. These were to be used by the teachers, farmers, and government officers who were to civilize the Indians. Nathaniel Perry was the first of the teachers to arrive. Afterward, in the same capacity came Clark Dickenson, Robert Irwin and Ira Baird. But their work was of no avail. The Indians preferred to live in wigwams and to use their cabins to stable their horses. The agency failed in its purpose and in September 1836 both parties abandoned their agreement. At the same time the lands in Winnebago County north of the Fox River were ceded to the government.

Webster Stanley, one of the workmen on this government project, was attracted by the possibilities of the region, and in 1836 came to the present site of Oshkosh. Here he found a ferry and trading post operated by James Knaggs. This half-breed had a log cabin on Coon's Point, a part of the present Municipal Golf Course. Stanley purchased the ferry, and materials in the Knagg's cabin and moved them down closer to the mouth of the Fox River. The cabin was erected on the present site of the Wisconsin Power and Light Company plant. Chester Gallup of Ohio came with his sons the

same year, and lived with Mr. Stanley until his cabin could be erected. Thus began the first permanent settlement in the county.

These pioneers were followed by others, chiefly from the east, who spread out in the county rather rapidly and evenly. The region was organized under the Territorial Legislature in 1839 into the Towns of Winnebago and Buttes des Morts as a part of Brown County. In 1840 it was separated from Brown County as Winnebago County. The organic town organizations of Oskosh, Neenah, Buttes des Morts (Omro), Rushford, and Brighton (Nekimi) were made in 1847, with Utica and Winneconne coming in the next year. By 1855 the whole county had been organized into the present sixteen towns, which now comprise it.

The Town of Omro was first organized under the name of Buttes des Morts at the home of its first permanent settler, Edward West, on April 6, 1847. Nelson Olin was chosen Moderator and N. W. Wolverton, Secretary. Among the town officers chosen were Edward West, Chairman, John Munroe and Frederick Tice, Supervisors, and Edward West, Barns Haskall and Nathan Wolverton, Commissioners of schools.<sup>1</sup> On March 15, 1849 the name of Buttes des Morts was changed to Bloomingdale, and in 1852 by act of the county board was changed to its present name of Omro.

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1. Town of Omro, Minute Book, 1847-1870. No Publisher. (Manuscript). p.1. A bound volume manuscript record of the Town of Omro in possession of Mr. A. O. Altman, Town Clerk.

Two varying accounts for the name "Omro" are on record. One is to the effect that the name Bloomingdale was too long. Two young business men, Joel Taylor and E. B. Dean, decided that the name must be short and easy to pronounce. They wrote several letters of the alphabet on slips of paper, one letter to each slip. After shaking them in a hat they drew out four slips and arranged them to form Omro.<sup>1</sup>

The second, and more plausible one, is that a trading post had been operated in the vicinity by a French half-breed, Charles Amereau, or written as the English understood it, Charles Omro. "Previous to 1845, Charles Omro, a half-breed, had put up a log hut and established a trading post near where the Compound Company's building afterwards stood."<sup>2</sup>

As might be expected, school facilities for the education of their children early claimed the attention of these settlers. Most of the first schools were conducted as private schools in the homes of individuals. This is the cryptic description of the original one: "Miss Emiline Cook taught the first school in the county at Oskosh in 1841. Henry A. Gallup closed the school by marry-

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1. Luthera Adams, Historical Sketch of the Old Red Brick School, Champlain Law Printing Company, Chicago, 1928, p.5

2. A. Andreas, History of Northern Wisconsin, The Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1881, p. 1183.

ing the teacher."<sup>1</sup> The following experience at Neenah is a typical frontier occurrence:

"Early in the season Mr. Clinton, with the assistance of some of his congregation, fitted up a log house, built by Smith Moores, in 1845, for religious services. Here Miss Caroline Northrup opened a private school, and in the fall, the first public school was inaugurated, with one Lambert for teacher, but after about a month an extended furlough was granted him."<sup>2</sup>

Instances in the Town of Omro also suggest that private schools were the first ones to be established there. In 1848, during Mr. Myron Howe's absence from home, his bachelor quarters were occupied by a school with Mrs. Abram Quick as teacher. Mrs. George Beckwith taught a school in her own house, as did Mrs. Hannah Alin, in the Lowd neighborhood. A letter written by T. V. Humes, son of Omro's first settler, David Humes, describes the earliest school in the village as follows:

"In 1848 a school was opened in Omro in the chamber of a building occupied below as a dwelling which stood across from where the "Exchange" was built later on, and the teacher was a Mr. Cooley."<sup>3</sup>

This "chamber" was an upstairs room in the house next to the northwest corner lot at Main and Pearl Streets,

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1. P.V. Lawson, History of Winnebago County, C. F. Cooper and Company, Chicago, 1908, Vol. 1, p. 239.

2. Harney, Op. Cit., p. 198.

3. T.V. Humes, "Letter to the Editor", The Omro Herald, September 18, 1909, p. 1.

being reached by an outside stairs built on the north side of the house. For many years Mrs. Bullis lived there and is now occupied by the S. Barnard Family.

Presumably the Mr. Cooley referred to continued to be interested in school affairs, and became the Town Superintendent of Common Schools for the Town of Omro during the 1854 term. (See Table II on page 17.) Another private school was taught by Mr. George Herrick during the winter of 1849-50. He was a graduate of a Massachusetts Normal, and opened his school that winter as it was the slack season for his farm work.<sup>1</sup>

But the growth of the county was too rapid to rely upon private schools, for in 1846 the population was 732; increased the next year to 2,787; and in 1850 was 10,167.<sup>2</sup> The territorial legislature in 1841 had created the county, town, and school districts as subordinate units of the territory, and delegated to them powers regarding the organization and maintenance of schools. Three commissioners of schools were to be elected annually with powers to create districts in the town, apportion money and to act as inspectors. In 1848 the office of town superintendent of schools was created

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1. Adams, Op. Cit., p. 5.

2. Harney, Op. Cit., pp. 108-110.



by the legislature. This officer took over the powers of these commissioners with an added one, namely, the examining and licensing of teachers.

Under authority of these acts the school commissioners of the town met at the home of Frederick Tice on October 22, 1847 and organized two school districts in the town of Buttes des Morts (Omro). The first of these became known as the Tice School, and is now Joint District Number Four, Town of Utica. The other one is the West School, or District Number One, Town of Omro. On January 13, 1848 they met at the home of E. West and created District Number Three, called the Lowd School, and is now known as the Maple School. Later that year District Number Four, the Howe School, was created. The next spring, lands embodying the chief interest in this study were assigned in District Number Five:<sup>1</sup>

"At a meeting of the Supervisors of the Town of Bloomingdale at the Town Clerk's office this 9th day of May, 1849, do hereby set off the following described sections for organizing a School District therein: Ordered that School District No. (5) five shall consist of Sections 17, 18, 19, and 20. Also the fraction of section No. (8) eight that lies on the east side of the Fox River in Town (18) eighteen North of Range (15) fifteen east, also the north-west quarter of section No. (21) twenty one in the above named town and range.

Bloomingdale May 9, 1849.

|            |                |             |
|------------|----------------|-------------|
| James Olin | Nelson Olin    |             |
| Town Clerk | John Nelson    | Supervisors |
|            | Jude F. Rogers |             |

---

1. Town of Omro, Op. Cit., p. 32.

On August 28, 1849 Mr. G. W. Beckwith, Superintendent, certified the above described lands to be District Number Five. Although there was no record of his election at the April 3, 1849 Town Election, George Beckwith signed an oath of office on April 11, 1849 as the first School Superintendent of Common Schools for the Town of Bloomingdale. His successor to the office, Edward West, (Table II on page 17) left the following financial report at the close of his year in office, which in itself is indicative of the scope of the work of the officer as shown in Table I:

TABLE I

TOWN SUPERINTENDENT'S FINANCIAL REPORT, 1851-52.<sup>1</sup>


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|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Received of George W. Beckwith, former Supt. | \$ 30.00      |
| Received Town Treasurer, March 1852          | 241.00        |
| Received County Treasurer, April 1852        | 183.93        |
| Amounting in all to                          | <u>454.93</u> |
| <br>   |               |
| Paid to Joint Dist. No. 11 Algoma, 1851      | 12.45         |
| Paid to Joint Dist. No. 4 in Utica, 1851     | 17.64         |
|  | <u>30.09</u>  |
| Leaving a balance in my hands of             | 434.93        |
|  | <u>455.02</u> |

Subject to apportionment among the several districts for the benefit of common schools and libraries for the ensuing year.

This sum is to be distributed among 391 children and gives to each child a fraction over \$1.08 all of which together with a map of the school districts as they are now organized is respectfully submitted.

Bloomingdale April 6th, 1852  
Edward West  
Superintendent

---

1. Town of Omro, Op. Cit., p. 68.

The organic election of District Five was held at two P.M. on May 7, 1850 at the home of George Gallutia in Omro in answer to the call of the Town Superintendent, Mr. G. W. Beckwith. Dr. William P. McAllister was elected Director, W.W. Wilcox, Clerk and James Peck, Treasurer. The meeting adjourned until the next evening at seven when the site for the school was decided upon. This was a lot donated by Dr. McAllister to be used forever for school purposes. This formed part of the land at the northwest corner of Pleasant and West Division Streets upon which the Red Brick School later was erected, and since its demolition has been used as a school playground and tennis court. At this meeting it was voted to raise two hundred dollars for the erection of a school building.<sup>1</sup>

During that summer an "unknown lady", (that is, her name is not found in the records) taught a school term, for at a meeting on March 29, 1851 one item of business was "to take into consideration the propriety of voting a tax to pay the lady teacher who taught the summer school in said district the summer of 1850. It was voted to raise by tax twenty eight dollars to pay this teacher."<sup>2</sup>

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1. School District Number Five, Village of Omro, Minute Book, 1850-1859. No publisher. (Manuscript).p.5. A bound volume manuscript record of the district in possession of Mr. A. C. Birkholz, School Clerk.

2. Adams, Op. Cit., p. 8.

In September, 1850, a sum of eighty dollars was voted to finish building the school and furnish it for winter use. Mr. Henry Priddey was hired as teacher for four months at twenty-two dollars per month and board. Miss Phebe Pettingel taught the summer session of 1851 for the sum of two dollars per week, and board at the pupils' homes. Miss Sarah March was the teacher during the winter term. The fuel expense for these winter terms was ten dollars twenty cents and nine dollars and thirty cents respectively. At the same time Miss Maria Peabody, later Mrs. L. Hough, taught a private school over Mr. Bigelow's store at the north end of the bridge.<sup>1</sup>

The district was increased in sized by the addition of two sections across the Fox River by order of Mr. H. W. Webster, Town Superintendent, as follows:<sup>2</sup>

"To the Town Clerk of Bloomingdale,

I have this day annexed to School District No. 5 in said Town of which the following is a description, Sections 7 & 8.

Dated this 28th day of October, 1852.

H. W. Webster

Town Superintendent of Schools for said Town of Bloomingdale.

These "Indian Lands" as they were called were opened to settlement in that year, although a few settlers had filed claims to some lands previously, the first one being Mr. O. E. Loper in 1847. The Yankee land rush was

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1. Adams, Op. Cit., p. 8.

2. Town of Onro, Op. Cit., p. 71.

still on, and these fertile fields were soon filled with settlers. As a result, the capacity of the Omro school became overtaxed, and at a special meeting in November it was decided to divide the school into two departments and rent an additional room to accommodate the pupils. So part of the older children were assigned to the room over Mr. Bigelow's store, which was now used by the district. Crossing the river during high water in the spring created a problem for the students, as the float bridge was sometimes carried away.

Teachers identified with the above mentioned rooms were Mrs. John Ross, Mr. Cooley, Mr. Gilbert, and Mr. Luther Reed. Mr. Reed finished the term as Town Superintendent in 1855 and the full term of 1856. His work in the community was held in high esteem, and today the stained glass window in the west side of the First Baptist Church of Omro is dedicated to his memory.

The annual district meetings were held in September just before the opening of the fall term, until the new law changed it to the second Monday in July in 1863. The winter term of fourteen to sixteen weeks followed the opening of the new year, and the spring or summer session came as the roads opened for travel. The officers were chosen at these meetings, one each year for a three year term. A committee was appointed to examine the treasurer's records, and to recommend the amount to be raised

the next year. As the items usually consisted of the teacher's salary, fuel, rent and a few incidentals this took but a short time. Later two committees were appointed, one to examine the treasurer's records, and the other to recommend the new budget. It was not until 1871 that the practice was introduced of appointing an auditing committee to examine the records and report at the next annual meeting. This practice is still followed.

At the annual meeting of 1855 the board was authorized to arrange for the construction of a building large enough to accommodate all of the pupils under one roof. Omro was now ready to provide proper quarters for the educational advancement of its children. The pioneer ideal was beginning to materialize.

TABLE II

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS OF COMMON SCHOOLS FOR TOWN OF OMRO<sup>1</sup>

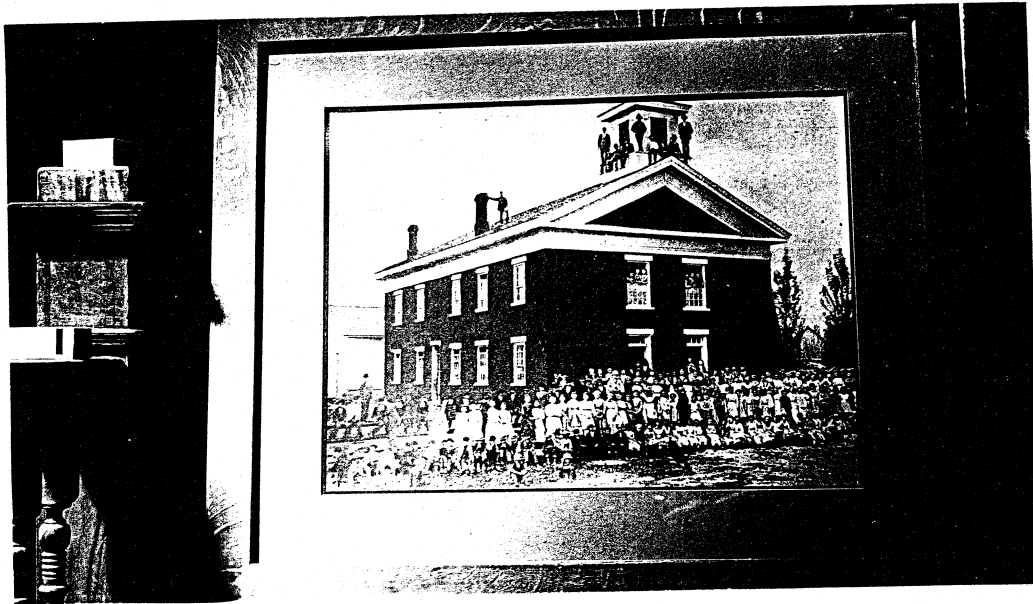

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|                  |           |                |           |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| George Beckwith  | 1849-1850 | Luther A. Reed | 1856      |
| Edward West      | 1851      | H. Raymond)    |           |
| Hiram W. Webster | 1852      | C.W. Watson)b  | 1857      |
| Chas. W. Watson  | 1853      | D.P. Dean      | 1858-1860 |
| G.B. Cooley      | 1854      | C.H. Marshall) |           |
| Loren Robbins)   |           | J.N. Hoaglin)c | 1861      |
| Luther A. Reed)a | 1855      |                |           |

---

- a. Luther A. Reed was appointed to office because incumbent was absent too much.  
 b. C.W. Watson was appointed when H. Raymond resigned.  
 c. Tie vote of 178 votes apiece, with C.H. Marshall winning by lot.
- 

1. Town of Omro, Op. Cit., Compiled from the election results recorded by the clerks.



The Red Brick School, 1856-1893. This is a view of an enlargement of a picture taken of the school in 1874. The "woodshed" used as a schoolroom is partially visible at the left.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD RED BRICK ERA

As typically American as the pioneer log cabin was the little red school house of the nineteenth century. Its fame has been emphasized in song and fiction to a degree that may seem exaggerated, but at that time, it shone with a brilliance in the wilderness that attracted many wayward feet to its doorstep. Its dying radiance is reflected today by America's leaders who answered the call of its handbell.

On March 3, 1856 the contract for the new school in Omro was let to George Stokes for the sum of two thousand one hundred and seventy dollars. It was to be erected on the McAllister site of the first schoolhouse, which was in turn moved to the north side of Pleasant Street between Exchange and Mill Streets. Here it was remodelled and is now used as a home by Mr. Max Bower. As often happens in the construction of public buildings the original estimate for the school fell short, and an additional sum had to be raised to complete it.

This two story red brick building was completed and ready for use in December of 1856. It faced east with entrances on the front and south sides. Three departments were provided, the primary and intermediate on the first floor, and the upper grades and high school on the second



floor. Access to the primary grades, which were in the rear room, was through the side door. Miss Jennie M. Huie, who became Mrs. Henry C. Hollister, was the first teacher to greet the beginners in this new school. The intermediate room was in the front part on the first floor, and included what roughly corresponds to grades four through seven. Mrs. T. Bunker was the first teacher in this room. A description of this room as it was a few years later is left for us in the following paragraph:

"It is not a large room. There are just four windows, two on each side, with no shades. We need all the sunlight. The teacher's desk is on a raised platform and a blackboard is behind the desk. There is a long blackboard in the back of the room and a raised platform below it. The desks are double. They are well marred and carved with the initials of those who have gone on before. There are two doors at the front which enter into closets, each containing a window. These closets had several uses. One, a place to banish mischievous children. When the teacher thought that a child had had time to repent, she would open the door only to find her culprit had escaped through the open window."<sup>1</sup>

Those who went upstairs did so to the right and left through the front doors, the boys one way and the girls the other. Their wraps and lunch pails were hung along the wall on their respective side of the room. In later years when the young men who went upstairs were boisterous to the point of rowdyism it was necessary to close the front entrance to the intermediate room, and those

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1. Myrtle Morrison McLeod, "The Intermediate Room", The Omro Herald, July 28, 1934. p. 8.

students had to use the side entrance. Mr. Henry Raymond of Oshkosh was the first principal at a salary of fifty dollars per month. The building was heated by three stoves in the upstairs room and one each in the two downstairs rooms. At recess time the principal would say, "Well boys, we need some more wood." Sometimes he set the example in carrying in the two foot pieces of wood which were piled in the corner. Ofttimes the stoves became red hot, but school continued. Today both children and teachers would feel ill at ease under similar conditions. Occasionally a rubber pencil eraser thrown on the hot stove, or a sack of straw stuffed down the chimney caused a smoke screen which dismissed school for the day.

But Omro's school problem was not solved. Within ten years additional rooms about the village had to be rented to care for the extra students. The Civil War was over and the timber industry of Wisconsin waterways and mills was ready to resume operations. Mr. David Humes, the first permanent settler in Omro in 1845, had invented a grouser, or upright anchor boat. This made towing of logs upriver a possibility, and so lumber mills in Omro would be assured of a plentiful supply of the logs run down the Wolf River, rafted at Bay Boom and made ready for the ever hungry buzz saw. Men were needed for this growing industry, and as a result the "saw dust towns" grew by leaps and bounds way ahead of the estimates of the planning com-

mittees of school districts.

A committee of five was appointed at the annual meeting of September 24, 1866 to "ascertain what can be done about building". Their recommendation on October 1 to raise two thousand dollars by tax was rejected. Three weeks later, at an adjourned meeting, five hundred dollars was voted to build a building suitable for a school room, and which later might be used as a woodshed for the Red Brick School. An additional hundred dollars was allowed for stoves and other necessary incidentals. For many years this building was used as a schoolroom for those who had finished the intermediate room before they went upstairs. The pupils assigned to this room felt that it was something of a disgrace to be obliged to attend school in the "woodshed", precursor of many a "barracks school" in America's rapidly growing cities.

This woodshed did not fully solve the housing problem. On October 8, 1866 two hundred dollars was voted to purchase four lots of Dr. W. P. McAllister on the north side of the river, and two years later five hundred dollars was allowed to purchase lumber for the building. On November 7, 1868 the intended site was ordered sold, and a new one purchased from Albert Frank. The community was divided on the question of building new quarters, and at the July 1869 annual meeting voted not to build at that time and ordered the money already appropriated to be

loaned out at interest. The next year, however, the proponents for a new school were successful, and a thousand dollars was voted to apply on a three thousand dollar brick veneer building, the construction of which was to be completed by December 1, 1870. This school was located on the southwest corner of Ridge and Mapes Streets, on the property now occupied by Frank Peterson.

Two other rooms in various parts of the village were used for school purposes during these years. One is commonly referred to as the "Ames Place" which was an old blacksmith shop on the northwest corner of W. Division and Genesee Streets. This shop was remodelled and used as a classroom. During 1868 Mr. Ames was paid the sum of thirty six dollars rent for his shop. The next year he was paid one hundred dollars, and the next year fifty dollars. The other room was a department in the basement of the Christian Church during the 1873 term.

The school district at that time was organized as School District Number Five, Town of Omro, and hence included lands outside the incorporated village. Children in the district were eligible to come, and parents in the eastern part felt that a school in that section was necessary now that the north side had succeeded in obtaining one. They were successful to the extent of two hundred dollars in 1872 for the purchase of lots for a site. They had to struggle to keep that amount intact,

and in 1876 they voted down a proposal to purchase and remodel the old Methodist Church building on the southeast corner of Pearl and Lincoln Streets. So they caused to be built a wooden structure similar to the one on the north side on the northeast corner of Pleasant and Washington Streets. The construction of the north side building had proven faulty and in 1882 the board decided to have the brick walls taken down and replaced with wood sidings. When the new high school was built in 1893 these schools were used for a time longer as a primary school and then ordered sold. The ad below gives the details for their sale:<sup>1</sup>

#### FOR SALE

The East Side School property belonging to Dist. No. 5 Town of Omro, consisting of schoolhouse, size 32x48 ft. woodshed, etc. Lot 150x120 ft. Price of building alone; five hundred and fifty dollars (\$550), Price of lots two hundred dollars (\$200). Also North Side School property belonging to above named district consisting of school house, size 32x48 ft., woodshed, etc. Price of building alone, five hundred dollars (\$500). Lot size 150x300 ft. Price two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250). Enquire of any one of the School Board.

I.A. Tuttle, Clerk

The North Side School was dismantled, but in 1909 the other one was purchased by Mr. A. Austria for five hundred fifty dollars, and moved to its present site on Water Street where it is used as a grist mill.

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1. "Classified Advertisement", The Omro Herald, August 1, 1908, p. 5.

No matter which of these schools described a pupil attended, if he progressed far enough, he was promoted to the upstairs, or high school of the "Red Brick" School. Here he was under the tutelage of the assistant, and in the final years of his stay, in classes taught by the principal. This man was kept busy with his teaching, and supervision of the lower departments, as well as the other two schools under his jurisdiction. The caliber of the work offered in this department was dependent on the personality and training of whoever was principal, and the influence, or drawing power of the school rose and fell accordingly.

But after nearly half a century the Red Brick showed evidence of hard service. Better methods of heating, lighting, and sanitation had been developed by a rapidly growing industrialized America. Worthy as it had been, the community felt that the building should be replaced by more up to date quarters. Accordingly, a new high school was erected across the street south of the Red Brick, and was ready for occupancy in 1893. The Red Brick was dismantled by Mr. Calvin Morton and many of the brick were obtained by former students as keepsakes. Mrs. L. Bushnell painted a replica of the school on many of these. A visit to grandmothers, or to the home of some older resident will reveal a red brick used as a doorstep. In answer to the query, "What is this red brick?"

will come the proud reply, "That, sir, is a brick from the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse."

The following is a typical testimony of all who attended it:

"It is not the material structure of this old red brick school house that we love so dearly, but the people we grew up with, those who worked and played with us there. I wish every one in the world could have an old red brick schoolhouse in memory as I have."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Myrtle Morrison McLeod, Op. Cit., p. 8.



The Webster Manual Training School



## CHAPTER III

### THE WEBSTER MANUAL TRAINING SCHOOL

Most every community has benefited, at one time or another, from the foresight and generosity of at least one local, public-spirited individual. One of the foremost of these in Oiro, and surely the most outstanding of all as far as the school is concerned, was Hiram W. Webster. Mr. Webster appeared upon the Wisconsin scene in the heyday of the lumber barons, made his modest fortune in that industry, and very appropriately made provisions to share his earnings in timber with the school. This was in keeping with the spirit of the framers of the Northwest Ordinance when they proposed that the virgin wealth of the Territory be used to support education. A sketch of his life will add to a better understanding for his contribution.

Hiram W. Webster was born in Hampton, Washington County, New York on January 10, 1824. He lived on a farm as a boy and attended the country school. At the age of eighteen he enrolled in the Troy Conference Academy at Poulthney, Vermont. Upon his graduation he taught school for five winters. As a teacher he had more than ordinary success, much of which was due to his irresistible spirit of resolution and thorough, though not severe discipline,

qualified with natural modesty and reserve.

Mr. Webster came to Wisconsin in 1847, locating in Oshkosh. He invested most of his money in a shingle mill venture which turned out to be a failure. He moved to a farm which he had purchased just east of Omro on Abarnathy's Corners, and after a few years moved into the village of Omro where he had his residence until his death in 1884. Realizing the growing possibilities of the lumber business he purchased a sawmill in 1868, and in the following years extensive purchases of timber lands were made to keep the mill in operation. To this enterprise he devoted most of his time and energy. His fellow citizens recognized his ability, however, and called upon him for service in civic life; and so he served on the town, village, and county boards, and two terms in the state legislature beginning in 1878. His health began to fail about this time, and after placing his business affairs in order, went away for a complete rest. Accompanied by his wife, Louisa M. Webster, he went to Michigan and then to California, but it was to no avail. He died on May 14, 1884 at Tracy, California.

Mr. Webster's will dated November 28, 1883, after directing the disposal of his properties to his wife and other heirs contained the following provision:

"Fifteenth-It is my will, and I direct, that in case my estate exceeds the legacies mentioned in this, my will, that the surplus or remainder of my

estate be appropriated and used by my executors in aid or encouragement of charitable purposes, and if in their judgment there should be a sufficient amount of said surplus, I would recommend that the same be used to establish a school in Omro, or some place in Winnebago County, Wisconsin, for the education of young people in the domestic and useful arts; but in case there is not enough of my estate to meet the above legacies, that the deficit may be borne pro rata between the legatees, except my beloved wife Louise M. "1

Not only was Mr. Webster generous in this provision (as will be shown later this surplus amounted to approximately fifty thousand dollars) but he also was somewhat visionary in providing for the erection of a building to instruct young people in the manual and domestic arts. When his will was written in 1883 this phase of education in high schools was practically non-existent. A number of factors, tangible and intangible, may be suggested in accounting for Mr. Webster's bequest. First of all, he was educated in the east at a time when that section took pride in being well educated. Together with Mrs. Webster, who was a woman of New England culture, they represented in a pioneer community the better stock that was creating a new America, and this school was to be their contribution. Furthermore, his experiences as a teacher, and

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1. Webster Manual Training School, Minute Book, 1905- to date. No Publisher. (Manuscript). p. 137. A bound volume manuscript record kept by the School Clerk.

Edward Sargent, Account Book, 1885-1905. No Publisher. (Manuscript). p. 68. The record of accounts kept by Mr. E. Sargent, an executor of H. Webster's will, now in the vault of the Omro High School.

later as Town Superintendent of Common Schools for the Town of Omro, gave him first hand experiences of leadership in child preparation. As a legislator in Madison, Mr. Webster initiated legislation to encourage the teaching of such subjects as would enable young people to be better fitted for life's tasks and problems in a practical way. Then, too, in his later years, as he planned for the future operations of his mill, he must have realized that in the lives of the coming generation a greater amount of preparation would be necessary than had been available to the lumberjacks and farmers of his day. Thus came the threads which were woven into MR. WEBSTER'S DREAM.

Under the terms of the Webster will admitted to probate on June 1, 1884 his widow, Louisa M., Mr. E. Sergeant, and Mr. E. K. Hicks were designated to administer settlement. Theirs was no easy task, for in 1887 there was approximately one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars in various and scattered properties to administer. A word of commendation is due them for their successful liquidation of the estate to pay all bequests as indicated, and have a residue in 1905 of fifty-two thousand four hundred eleven dollars and sixteen cents to carry out the last item of the will, namely, the aforementioned school for domestic and useful arts.

By 1898 the trustees were prepared to make the

following proposition:<sup>1</sup>

"To the School District Number five (5) Village and Town of Omro, made June 25, 1898: Building to provide for departments substantially as suggested by committee to cost not less than \$10,000; equipped for all departments at cost of \$7,000. To be run three (3) years without power, etc.

Cost to maintain annually not less than \$2,500 when with power, balance of fund to yield its income to assist in maintenance.

Said building and equipment to be completed and furnished to satisfaction of trustees of H. W. Webster estate be the same more or less than sums above mentioned, cost to maintain to be not less than \$2,000 until power put in building. Trustees reserving the right to dictate when power to be put in."

Signed E. Sargeant  
L.M. Webster  
E.R. Hicks

The reply of the School District was as follows:<sup>2</sup>

"To the Executors of the H.W. Webster Estate, at an adjourned annual school meeting of School District No. 5 of the Village and Town of Omro, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, held at the High School building in said Village on the 30th day of August, 1898.

Your proposition to said district in regard to the Manual Training School was accepted by a vote of 53 for the proposition and 23 against the proposition."

Yours respectfully,  
J. T. Orchard  
District Clerk

The opposition of 23 voters to such a generous offer may appear unusual, but at that time some felt that

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1. E. Sargeant, Op. Cit., p. 151.

2. Ibid., p. 152

the proposition had been presented for decision without opportunity for discussion. This really was a trivial excuse, as the matter had been placed before the district at the annual meeting in July. A sounder reason for opposition appears in the fact that this type of vocational education was considered an innovation by a certain element in the community. Others felt that the added cost of providing a teaching staff and other expenses would be more than the taxpayer could afford.

It was not until 1905, however, before the trustees were in position to make final disposition of the balance of the estate. On October 2, 1905 they caused to be organized a corporation known as the Webster Manual Training School, and under direction of the court turned over the sum of fifty-two thousand four hundred and eleven dollars and sixteen cents, less the expense of administration amounting to three thousand forty-seven dollars and eighty-five cents, or a net balance of forty-nine thousand three hundred and sixty-three dollars and thirty-one cents.<sup>1</sup>

According to the provisions of incorporation these persons met at the Citizens Bank of Cairo on October 4, 1905: Mr. E. Sargeant, Mr. L. R. Hicks, Mrs. L. M. Webster, Mr. F. M. Gensch, and Mr. H. E. Carver. It will be

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1. Webster Manual Training School, Op. Cit., p. 39.

noted that the first three mentioned were the administrators of the original Webster will. The officers elected were President E. Sargeant, Vice-President Mrs. L. H. Webster, Secretary Mr. H. E. Carver, and Treasurer Mr. E. R. Hicks.<sup>1</sup>

This group also accepted the plans and specifications of architect A. D. Canover for the proposed Manual Training School building. The trustees under the terms of the will had initiated plans for this building, and on May 5, 1905 had allowed his bill of four hundred fifty dollars for them.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. J. E. Hallery was the contractor engaged to erect the building of brick, the outside appearance of which was in keeping with the style of the grade and high school building next to which it was to be erected. By the next summer the building was completed to the point where the directors of the Webster Board on June 5, 1906 took action as follows:

"Moved and carried that the Manual Training School Board after having built the building turn the same over to the District School Board to run and maintain, said District School Board to receive from the Manual Training School Board such funds as are available, from the earnings of the balance in their hands, to aid in the maintenance, and the school board is requested to proceed at once to

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1. Webster Manual Training School, Op. Cit., p. 1.

2. E. Sargeant, Op. Cit., p. 167.

the securing of the teaching force and to such other arrangements as are necessary for operating."<sup>1</sup>

This substantial brick structure fifty-five feet by seventy feet, with a wing for a heating plant, increased the capacity of the school system by over fifty per cent. The building is two stories above a twelve foot basement, and the attic was equipped for a gymnasium. The basement also was used for mechanical courses.

Two modifications in the outward appearance of the building have been made since its initial erection. One was a bridge or overhead tunnel built to connect the second floor of the building with the corresponding floor of the high school building. This enables the free use of both buildings without the pupils going outside in inclement weather.

The other change was the erection of a vestibule on the front of the building. This was authorized at a meeting on July 17, 1909 but was not erected until after the World War and then at the personal expense of Mrs. Webster. As you enter the building through this addition you will notice on the right a marble bust of Mr. Webster enclosed in a marble case. In imagination those who remember Mr. Webster can see a look of pleasure come across his features as he sees succeeding generations of

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1. Webster Manual Training School, Op. Cit., p. 11.



students making use of his bequest.

One important change in the organization of the Controlling Board was made the next year. Article III of the Amendment to the Articles of Organization of the Webster Manual Training School adopted on October 31, 1906 changed the membership of the corporation as follows:

"Membership in this corporation is limited to the executors or trustees of the last will and testament of Hiram W. Webster, deceased, and their successors as hereinbefore provided for, and the Clerk and Director of Joint School District Number Five (5) of the Town and Village of Onro."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is that today a part of the classes of the public schools of Onro are held in a building under the control of a separate corporation in which the District has a minority representation! That this board zealously guarded their right of administration of the building is indicated by an incident recorded in their minutes of December 8, 1914 as follows:

"Mr. C.O. Marsh (the principal) talked to the board about community meetings, and also asked for the men of the village for the use of the gymnasium of the Manual Training School building, two evenings of each week.

Motion made and seconded:

It is the sentiment of the Manual Training School Board that the proposed Men's Athletic Association formally present their request for the use of the gymnasium for their meetings, their proposals as to the maintenance, equipment, and light."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 22.

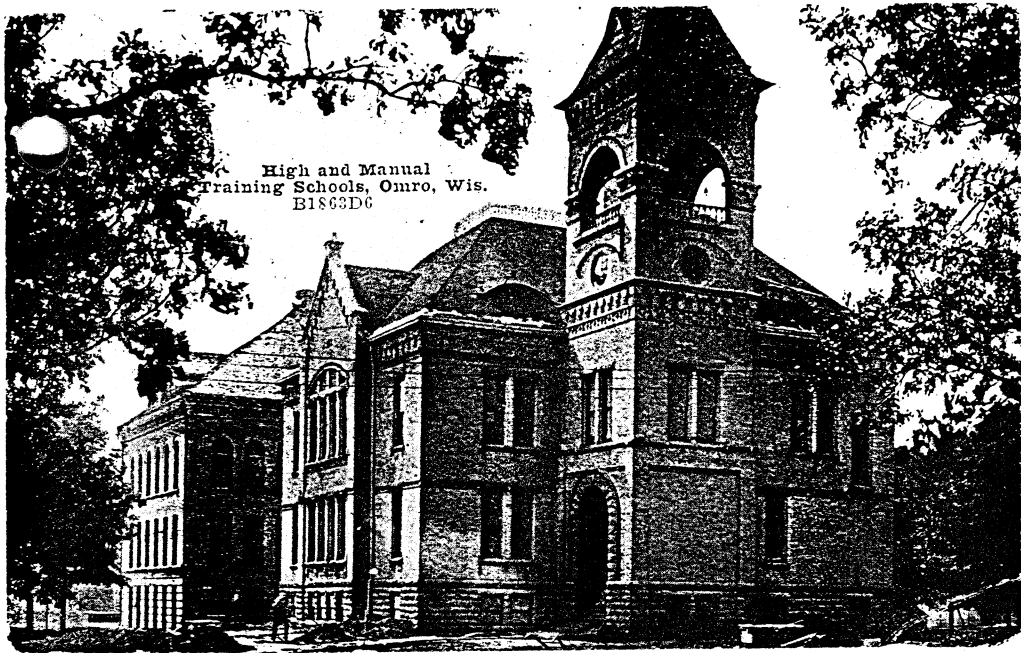
2. Ibid., p. 81.

Upon so doing, permission was granted at a later meeting.

As the older members of the board have been replaced by younger men there has been a gradual change in the board's attitude towards the use of the building. In 1927 the board granted permission to use one of the rooms for the eighth grade as it was not "at present being used for Manual Training School purposes." Today, in addition to its originally intended purpose for domestic and useful arts, it provides rooms for the kindergarten, fifth, seventh and eighth grades.

Thus the DREAM has become a reality, and the letterhead of the school stationery bears this perpetual testimony "Omro High and Webster Manual Training School."

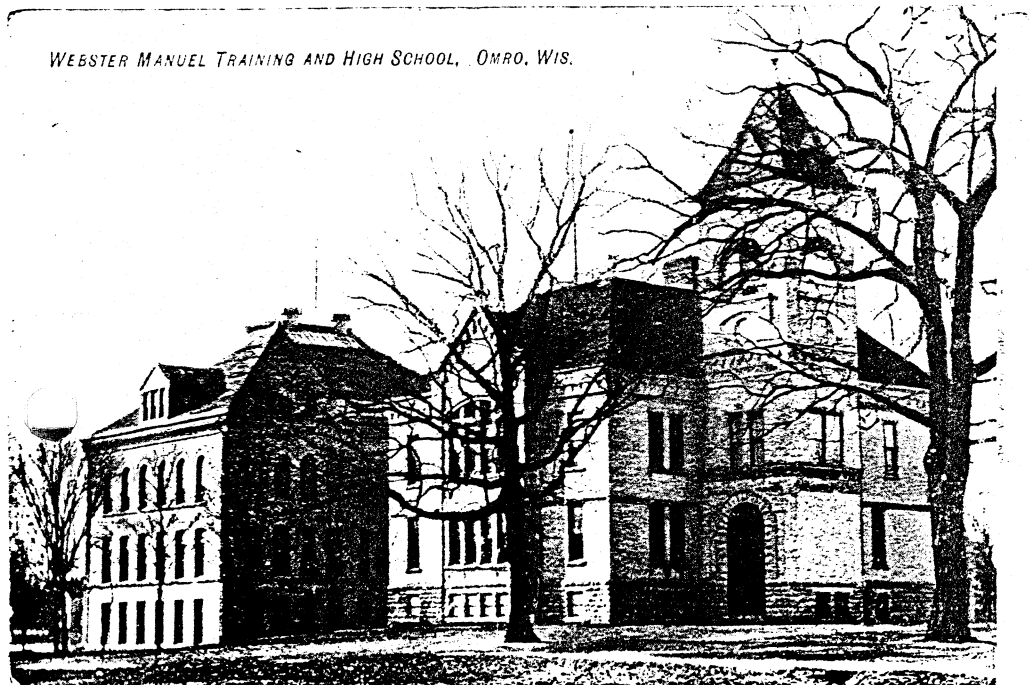
High and Manual  
Training Schools, Omro, Wis.  
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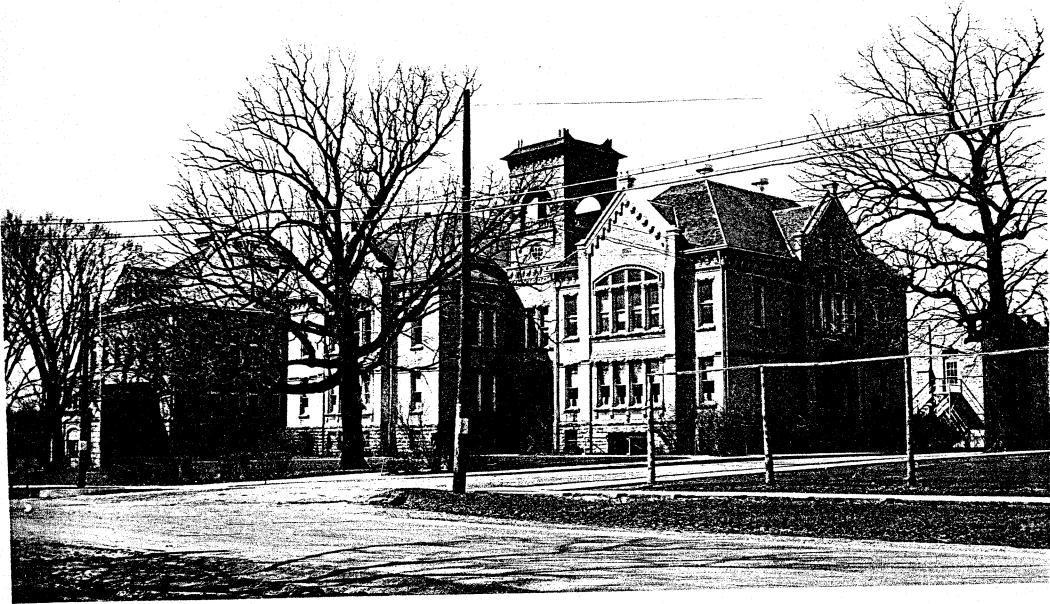


Baptist Church, Omro, Wis. 5518

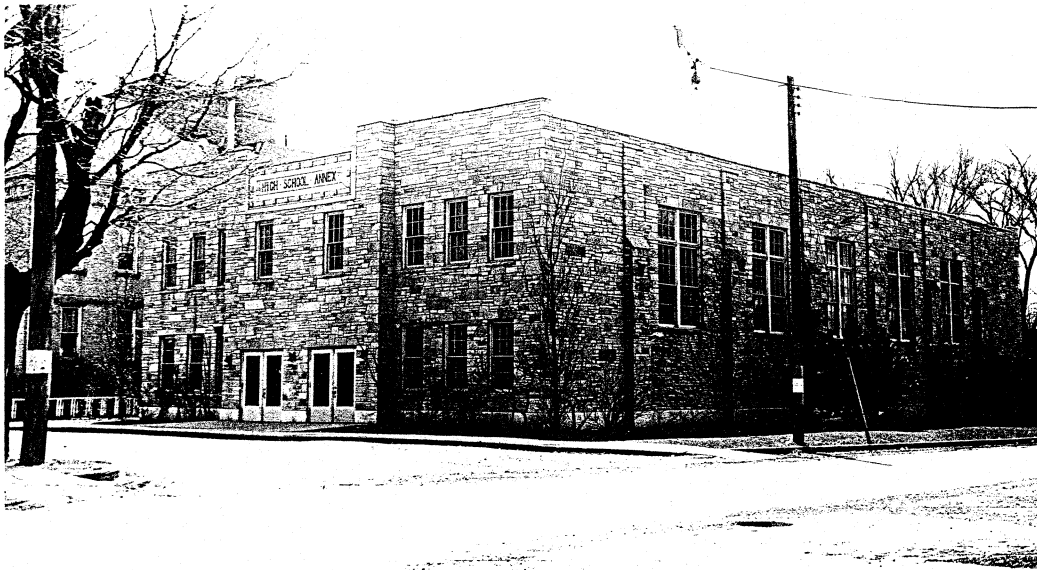


WEBSTER MANUEL TRAINING AND HIGH SCHOOL, Omro, Wis.





The Onro Public School. The first unit (1893) consisted of the portion under the belfry to the left. The second unit (1909) is to the right of the belfry. The Webster Manual Training School (1906) is the unit to the left. The High School Annex (1931) is at the extreme right.



The High School Annex

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRESENT HIGH SCHOOL AND ANNEX

Unfortunately the official records of the District for the period which the first unit of the present high school was erected are lost or misplaced. Part of the essentials are clear, however.

At the annual meeting of July 8, 1872 it was voted to purchase lots from Mr. Adams on the south side of Pleasant Street across from the Red Brick. These were used by the boys as a playground until the erection of the first unit of the present high school in 1893. This was a two story brick building on a stone foundation, with a belfry over the entrance way. There were two rooms downstairs, one each for the primary and intermediate rooms. The upstairs had three rooms for the high school; a recitation room for the principal's classes, another for the assistant's and the room under the belfry was the library.

The attraction of the new building caused the high school attendance to almost double in a year. The last graduating class from the old Red Brick had numbered four; the first one from the new high school numbered six; and for the next ten years ranged between five and fourteen. The other class is had increased in proportion.

Mrs. Minnie Trelevan Norton, for instance, one year had sixty-five pupils in the intermediate room designed for only thirty-three! She managed successfully by rotating the scholars in two groups, one reciting while the other studied. Again the matter of sufficient room became the paramount problem of the board. It was relieved slightly for a year when the Webster Manual Training School was opened for use in 1906. But the directors of this corporation felt the building should be used exclusively for vocational purposes, and ordered the district board to find other quarters for the two grades which had been assigned to that building.

A call for a special district meeting was issued for April 29, 1909. A severe storm kept the attendance to a mere handful. Various possibilities were discussed, and finally a committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of building an addition on the north side of the high school. The members of the committee were I. A. Tuttle, C. H. Larrabee, F. M. Gensch, F. Root, and S. Leighton.<sup>1</sup>

The suggestion to erect a new building created quite a furor in the community, especially as it came but a year or so after the erection of the Webster Manual Training School. Even though this building had been

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1. "News Notes", The Omro Herald, May 1, 1908, p. 3.

erected at private expense, many felt that too much money was being spent for educational facilities in the community. Others felt that the district had been too hasty in disposing of the North and East side schools. Another suggestion was to bar the tuition children from the grades. An editorial in The Omro Herald under the title "What Shall We Do?" said in part:

"The Omro High School is on the accredited list of high schools and ranks as one of the very best in the state. It must be kept there. A's children, B's children and C's children must be educated. They must be provided with ample and sanitary rooms and the best of teachers. The matter of cost is a secondary consideration. Omro has sent out into the business world many young men and women who are a credit to our high school. These things appeal to our wise judgment and careful action. Don't make a mistake and let spite prejudice influence your action."<sup>1</sup>

This type of calm reflective thinking prevailed at the special meeting held on May 21, 1909 and a committee consisting of F. Root, S. Leighton, and I. A. Tuttle was appointed to report on the probable cost of a new building. One week later they reported favorably, and an addition was authorized to be built on the north side of the high school. This was completed by the Christmas holiday and occupied in January 1910.

This Annex was a two story brick building matching in style the high school, and serving as a complement to it. Two additional grade rooms were on the first

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1. "What Shall We Do?", The Omro Herald, May 8, 1909, p.4

floor, and the second floor room was furnished to serve as a study and assembly room for the high school with a seating capacity of two hundred. The two rooms of the high school were partitioned to form four classrooms, and the library became the principal's office. This room served as the nerve center of the institution, children were called in from home or playground by the bell rope in one corner, and both truant and inquiring pupils were meted out appropriate advice by a succession of discerning principals.

One now had facilities to care for about two hundred grade pupils and over two hundred high school students. An enriched program of vocational as well as the customary academic subjects could be offered in a degree equalled by but few of the larger high schools of surrounding communities. Consequently, the school grew in numbers, which increased the tuition income of the district, and thus in turn a better teaching staff with more equipment could be obtained. Following the World War I greater emphasis was placed on physical training and athletics in high schools.

As the gymnasium on the top floor of the Webster Manual Training School was really not intended for such an extensive program other quarters became a necessity. For a number of years the district rented the American



Legion Hall at the southwest corner of Elizabeth and Water Streets for athletic contests, school plays, and parties. This hall was some distance from the high school and proved to be an unsatisfactory arrangement. Furthermore, it did not meet the state physical educational requirements, so in 1933 agitation developed to build a gymnasium adjacent to the high school.

At the regular meeting of the School Board of District Number Five of the Village of Omro held in the library of the high school on February 2, 1934 the preliminary resolution providing for the erection and equipment of a gymnasium and auditorium was introduced and approved. The title of the resolution read: "A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$20,000) CORPORATE NEGOTIABLE INTEREST BEARING COUPON BONDS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER FIVE (5), OF OMRO, WINNEBAGO COUNTY, WISCONSIN, UNDER CHAPTER 67 OF THE WISCONSIN STATUTES, FOR THE ERECTION AND EQUIPMENT OF A GYMNASIUM AND AUDITORIUM AT THE VILLAGE OF OMRO IN SAID SCHOOL DISTRICT AS AN ADJUNCT AND PART OF THE HIGH SCHOOL AND GRADE SCHOOLS OF SAID DISTRICT AND FIXING DETAILS IN RESPECT TO SAID BOND ISSUE."<sup>1</sup>

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1. School District Number Five, Record of Proceedings Preliminary to the Issuance of Bonds of School District Number Five (5), Village of Omro, 1934. No Publisher. (Manuscript). p. 2. A bound volume manuscript record kept by the School Clerk.

This resolution was signed by the members of the board, Director F. A. Siebensehn, Clerk A. C. Birkholz, and Treasurer L. E. Shelp. Notice of a special election to be held on February 17, 1934 was duly given and the resolution was approved by the electors of the district, 294 for and 195 against. The board subsequently made provisions for the issuance of the bonds and submitted the whole procedure to J. E. Finnegan, Attorney General of Wisconsin for his scrutiny. His approval of the legality of the proceedings was granted on April 24, 1934.

Meanwhile another source of money to help finance the undertaking was being explored by the board. As was explained in greater detail in Chapter III, there had been a residue in the hands of the Webster Manual Training School Corporation after that building was erected and equipped, amounting to sixteen thousand ninety-five dollars and six cents. Over the period of the intervening years this sum had increased, as the board of trustees had turned but a part of the interest over to the school board for the maintenance of the building.

The school board authorized Rodney Alder, attorney, to petition the County Court for Winnebago County to review the whole matter, with the intention of receiving permission to use this money for the erection of the proposed gymnasium and auditorium. Hearings were held from time to time between February 14, 1934 and March

21, 1934 when Judge D. E. McDonald ruled on the matter.

The substance of his finding was that the difference between the audit of March 16, 1934 amounting to twenty-five thousand two dollars and three cents and the residue of sixteen thousand ninety-five dollars and six cents left after erecting the Webster Manual Training School or eight thousand nine hundred six dollars and seven cents was to be paid to the School District Number Five (5). The ruling also authorized the trustees to keep the fund of sixteen thousand ninety-five dollars and six cents intact, and each year turn over to the school board any accruing increase.<sup>1</sup>

With these two sources of money to use, the board approved the plans submitted by Mr. Edward Tough, architect of Madison, Wisconsin. These provided for the erection of a building to the west of the high school opening on Pleasant Street. This Annex was finished in Lannon stone and made a creditable addition to the whole school plant. The overall size was sixty-one by one hundred ten feet and provided, in addition to a gym floor, a stage with dressing rooms on either side, an athletic office, and a room for storing materials. A runway connected the gym with the high school, giving access to shower rooms installed in the basement of

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1. Webster Manual Training School, Op. Cit., p. 137.

that building. Spacious quarters for the principal, clerk, and store rooms were included over the runway on the second floor.

Erection of the building was begun in May with Mr. Fred Witte acting as contractor for the board. The laying of the corner stone was held on Sunday July 1, with appropriate ceremonies. Mr. H. W. Schmidt of the State Department of Education was the principal speaker. Work on the structure progressed favorably during the summer, but a shortage of funds for the extensive remodeling necessitated a special meeting. On September 17, 1934 one of the largest gatherings of voters at a local school meeting heard the whole situation reviewed, and then voted 166 to 134 to authorize the board to borrow eleven thousand dollars to complete the whole project. An additional three thousand five hundred dollars was also voted to pay for the installation of two new boilers in place of the ones in the Webster building which had become faulty through long usage.

The shower and locker rooms were ready for use when school opened in September. Work on the interior of the gym continued for some weeks. The gymnasium or "High School Annex" was decorated and used for the Alumni Homecoming dance on November 8, 1934 after the football team had defeated Westfield seven to nothing.

The formal didication ceremonies were held on Tuesday evening December 4, 1934 with State Superintendent of Schools John Callahan, and William Chandler, Coach of Marquette University, Milwaukee, as speakers. The basketball game which followed saw Waupun defeat the Omro team twenty to sixteen. Another notable use of the building on Friday of the same week was the presentation of the "Rear Car", a mystery play given by Palm Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star, with the well known author and producer, Edward E. Rose, guiding its final rehearsals. About one thousand people were in attendance. Since its erection the building has been as extensively used by the community during the evenings as during the daytime by the students.

The last building to be added to the school plant came to the district without much expense to the taxpayers. This was commonly known as the Boy Scout or Band Building, located on the east side of W. Division Street across from the high school. The erection of this structure is an example of the community's concern for the moral and character welfare of its young people.

On January 30, 1914 the Big Brother's Organization was created, with the following portion of its preamble defining its purpose:

"Whereas a benevolent person, who wishes his

name to remain unknown, has offered \$2,000 for a Boy's Building in Omro, Providing the People of Omro will raise \$1,000 for the same object, ... have formed a corporate body according to the laws of the State of Wisconsin, for the purpose of providing such organizations as seek the religious and moral welfare of the boys and young men of Omro, with a suitable building for their work and to assist them in the accomplishment of that work."<sup>1</sup>

The first officers were Mr. J. G. Bennett, President, W. W. Noble, Vice-President, F. B. Sheerar, Secretary and Cary Bishop, Treasurer. A large group of representative business and townsmen belonged to the organization over the period of years following its inception. They were able to raise the necessary money with the aid of civic organizations to meet the original bequest. It developed that a former Omro man, Mr. C. X. Larrabee, was the donor of this legacy.

A contract was signed with Mr. Fred. Root, a local contractor, on January 27, 1916 to erect a one story, stucco covered building above a cement block foundation, for the sum of two thousand four hundred dollars. After its completion it provided club rooms in the basement, and a combination gymnasium-auditorium on the main floor. Various groups under responsible supervision used the building for a period of years. The Boy Scouts

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1. Big Brother's Organization, Minute Book, 1915-1929, No Publisher. (Manuscript). p. 2 A bound volume manuscript record of the organization in possession of Mr. W. P. Bussey, last Secretary of the organization.

made the greatest use of it, but as the group of boys grew up and lost interest in the organization it ceased to function. Through disuse the building began to show signs of neglect.

As the school children used the commodious grounds for their games, the executive committee requested a sum of money from the School District for repairs to the building. With the two hundred dollars voted at the July 5, 1925 meeting the necessary repairs were made, and in return the school agricultural fairs were held in the building each fall. The rest of the year it was not used, except by occasional groups of boys who entered the building surreptitiously. The men in charge of the property became concerned with their responsibility. Simultaneously the music department of the school was growing and needed larger quarters to carry on its work. Accordingly, on November 8, 1929 the executive committee of the Big Brother's Organization was authorized to confer with the District School Board and the County Judge relative to turning the building and grounds over to the district. This was done, and so the district acquired suitable quarters for the music department. In 1933, with funds from the Civil Works Administration paying for the labor costs, the grounds were leveled and made useable for a football athletic

field. In 1940 the two rooms in the basement were remodelled to be used by the kindergarten children. Unfortunately, the building burned on the night of July 16, 1942 during an electrical storm, destroying many band instruments and uniforms, along with the music library.

Again the problem of providing suitable quarters for the pupils confronts the community. War priorities have made its replacement at the present time impossible.

During nearly a century of settlement the community has taken pride in providing the necessary school buildings and equipment for its children. Differences of opinions sometimes existed over details of procedure, but the pioneer purpose has prevailed. Free schools have been maintained, and from them have gone forth students to fight in the last four American wars that the freedoms of democracy may prevail for all.



## PART II THE CURRICULUM AND ITS ADMINISTRATORS

### CHAPTER V

#### THE COURSE OF STUDY

Just as "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," so does the school consist of more than the physical buildings and equipment. Some one has suggested that a school could consist of a teacher and a pupil sitting on a log. Thus, a true picture of the Omro Schools will necessitate a consideration of the curriculum of the school and the men who have guided the students in the mastery of the courses.

The pioneer settlers were zealous for the educational and religious welfare of their children. In this respect they maintained the tradition of their forebearers who had settled the Atlantic seaboard and established the American republic. Their spirit of concern and sacrifice bore fruition in the perpetuation of their ideals in the schools established in the middle western states.

The familiar three fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic were the backbone of both the private and early public schools in Omro. During the 1850's spelling, English grammar, and some geography were also offered. The amount of each depended upon the preparation of the

teacher and the ability and progress of the pupils at that time. Two terms of three or four months each offered rather limited possibilities for advancement, unless a student attended full time. This was seldom the case in a pioneer community, especially for the boys, until after the Civil War. Then a nine months school of three terms was provided, and, as economic conditions improved, boys were able to attend school for a longer time.

Arithmetic as a subject consisted of mental or intellectual, and written forms. Mr. Cooley was the first teacher to teach written arithmetic during the 1853 term. Each pupil solved his examples at his seat, asking needed help from the teacher at the time set apart for this class. Mental arithmetic must have been as difficult for some as "story" problems are today. A comment about one student is entered in the register as follows: "Fit of passion brought on by mental arithmetic. Student expelled."

There were no prescribed courses of study. After the opening of the Red Brick, however, the District Board directed what should be taught in a resolution passed on December 5, 1857 in these terms:

"Resolved: That the following studies shall be taught in the primary department of said school, viz: Reading 1st & 2nd Readers, Spelling, Primary Arithmetic, and Primary Geography completed. In the intermediate of said school, Intellectual Arithmetic and Intermediate Geography completed, Writing and

Spelling, the 3d Reader completed and the 4th Reader commenced. Declamation & Composition."<sup>1</sup>

No action appears in the records directing what should be taught in the department upstairs. Each principal was free to teach by his own methods and emphasize those subjects which his inclination directed. The Town Superintendent evidently had little to do with curricular supervision. His work was largely one of administration and organization of new districts. Furthermore, a comparison of Table II on page seventeen with Table VII on page ninety-five will reveal that during their respective terms both Mr. Raymond and Mr. Dean served in the dual capacity of principal and Town Superintendent of Schools!

The graded system of arranging classes so familiar to us today was introduced in the county during the eighteen sixties. In Oshkosh it was described as follows:

"The graded system of schools is undoubtedly the best yet instituted. It is the system adopted in all eastern cities, and has received the commendation and approval of educational men everywhere."

In his report for 1869, Superintendent H. B. Dale of Oshkosh mentioned it in these terms: "All the schools

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1. School District Number Five, Op. Cit., p. 95.
  2. Holland, Oshkosh City Directory, Western Publishing Company, Chicago, 1868, p. 83.

are graded upon a plan, requiring twelve years to complete the course of study, at the end of which time the pupil is fitted to enter college."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Orville T. Bright, who became principal in Omro in 1868, completely reorganized the course of study upon this graded basis. He called the highest grade "First Grade" and so on down to the "Twelfth Grade" which was the first the pupil enrolled in when he entered school. Thus Omro kept in pace with improvements as they were promulgated and found worth of adoption.

Secondary education above the district school was usually provided in academies and seminaries incorporated under Wisconsin statutes. Michael Frank, that noble pioneer exponent of public education in Wisconsin, had led in the establishment of the first free high school at Kenosha in 1849. The movement was slow to develop as this excerpt indicates:

"The growth of high schools in the state, however, was slow. The supporters of academies and seminaries naturally opposed the idea, and the fact that additional taxes were required was used very effectively as an argument against the organization of such schools....By 1865 high schools had been established at Kenosha, Janesville, Sheboygan, Oshkosh, Green Bay, La Crosse, Fon du Lac, Madison, Watertown and Prairie du Chien."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Holland, Oshkosh City Directory, Western Publishing Company, Chicago, 1869, p. 11.
  2. Conrad E. Patzer, Public Education in Wisconsin, State Publication, Madison, Wisconsin, 1924. pp. 81-82.

From the time of its erection, the upstairs room in the Red Brick was commonly called the high school. This referred to its position in the building, not to its status in the general educational pattern of the time. As a result of Mr. Bright's reorganization, however, the graduating class of 1870 and received what was the equivalent of high school training. This group consisted of Masters I. McCall, Frank Challoner, Fred. Backus, H. Washburn and L. A. Smith, and Mesdames Hattie Hicks, Elma Lowd and Josie Howard. Mr. Smith, incidentally, is the eldest living alumnus of the school. The school needed to make but minor adjustments to qualify under the Free High School Law of 1875.<sup>1</sup>

This law was designed to aid and encourage the establishment of high schools, particularly in the rural areas of the state. Adjoining districts were authorized to combine their efforts to provide secondary education. High school boards were to administer these schools with identical powers which had been vested in the district schools since 1839. In addition to money raised by local taxation for these schools, the state was to provide aid up to five hundred dollars if a high school was maintained for thirteen weeks. Under the advice and consent

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1. Wisconsin Statutes. Chapter 323, 1875.

of the state superintendent the board was to decide upon the textbooks, course of study, and minimum standards for admission to the high school.

Omre promptly took the necessary steps to meet this law's requirements. At the annual meeting on July 12, 1875 "a committee of three was appointed by the Chair to act with the District Board to consider the matter of Free Town High Schools."<sup>1</sup>

A week later the committee's resolutions were adopted, authorizing the proper authorities to contact the several school districts in the Town of Omre relative to establishing the high school. The matter was thoroughly discussed during the winter months, and on February 9, 1876 the decision was made for the district to establish a high school by itself. The main resolution was stated in this manner:

"1st. Resolved that School District Number 5 in the Town of Omre, Wis. hereby authorize the School District Board to adopt the system and kind of school provided in Chapter 323 of the Session Laws of 1875 in the place of the department known as the highest department of this district and to discontinue that department at that time. That the School Board may use so much of the money as is now re-

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1. School District Number Five, Village of Omre, Minute Book, 1867-1883. No Publisher. (Manuscript). p. 24. A bound volume manuscript record kept by the School Clerk.

quired to support said highest department. Carried Yeas 38, Nays 7."<sup>1</sup>

The first real high school course of study issued by the school board was for the year 1877, and is indicative of the scope of the offerings of that time:

#### COURSE OF STUDY

##### First Year

- 1st Term: Arithmetic, English Grammar, Descriptive Geography.  
 2nd Term: Repeated.  
 3d Term: Arithmetic, English Grammar and Analysis, United States History.

##### Second Year

- 1st Term: Arithmetic, Sentential Analysis, U.S. History.  
 2nd Term: Elementary Algebra, U.S. History, Physiology.  
 3d Term: Elementary Algebra, Physical Geography, and Physiology.

##### Third Year

- 1st Term: Elementary Algebra, Physical Geography, Natural Philosophy.  
 2nd Term: Algebra, Physical Geography, Natural Philosophy.  
 3d Term: Plane Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Rhetoric.

##### Fourth Year

- 1st Term: Plane Geometry, Science of Government, German or Bookkeeping.  
 2nd Term: Solid Geometry, Botany, German or History of England.  
 3d Term: Chemistry, Botany, English Literature.

##### Fifth Year

- 1st Term: Astronomy, Ancient History or Zoology, Mental Science.  
 2nd Term: Astronomy, Ancient History or Geology, General Review.  
 3d Term: Political Economy, Moral Science, General Review.

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1. School District Number Five, Op. Cit., p. 27.

Exercises in Spelling, Reading, Declamation and Composition throughout the course.

#### Requirements of Admission

Pupils must pass examinations in the following branches:

**Reading:** Through the Fourth Reader.

**Spelling:** The ordinary words in the same.

**Writing:** A fair, legible hand.

**Arithmetic:** Fundamental Rules, Common and Decimal Fractions.

**Geography:** Through the United States:

**English Grammar:** To Syntax.

Aside from a difference in terminology, a striking similarity to the offerings of high schools today will be observed in the above. (See 1942 Course on page 75). Three notable differences are worthy of mention. The first is the entrance examination requirement. Today, pupils are admitted from eighth or ninth grades on the assumption that they have mastered the fundamentals of that particular grade. Too often they can neither read, spell nor cipher satisfactorily.

The second striking feature is the five-year plan of organization. Today we are accustomed to the four or three year senior high school. However, no permanent agreement has been reached by educators for organizing the grades of the common schools. The 1877 school in Omro was on the 3-4-5 year plan. Later a 4-4-4 plan was adapted, to be followed in turn by an 8-4, 6-3-3 plan, and finally a return to the present 3-4 plan. In the light of subsequent developments, the 3-4-5 plan of



that day apparently suited existing circumstances satisfactorily.

The final difference is the striking absence of vocational subjects. Bookkeeping is the only subject listed which could be considered vocational in nature. The emphasis of the school of that time was completely upon the academic phase of education. The product of the school was to be a refined lady or gentleman, cultured in the ways of the classics, including familiarity with one or two foreign languages.

But forces were at work to provide a practical training for the youth who were to take their places in an America which was rapidly becoming industrialized. The intricacies of the business world required the keeping of records. Just as private schools filled a need in common education, so have private schools provided training in the business field. There were several at different times in Oshkosh, but at one time Omro children could receive training in these branches in the village.

Aside from the private schools which existed in the community before the establishment of the regular district school, the only private venture on record was a school known as the "Student's Counting House." In 1880 this was listed as a Commercial School operated

by S. R. Manning,<sup>1</sup> but officially it was known by the former name. This business college, for such it was, was established in Omo during the 1870's by Mr. S. R. Manning. At first it was located on the second floor of the brick building on the northeast corner of Water and W. Division Streets. Later the school occupied quarters in the Spiritualist Hall, now known as the Legion Hall, and then in the Pelton Building which stood at the north end of the bridge.

Mr. Manning was an excellent bookkeeper, and also was a capable instructor of that subject. In addition, he taught the courses in mathematics. His wife assisted by teaching an academic course of German, English, and other subjects commonly found in the high school or academy of the day. At one time there were over forty students in attendance, and it was common knowledge that the Manning income was a hundred dollars per month. Among the known students were H.B. Winslow, W. Wagstaff, W. P. Bussey, F. Marsh, and Mrs. M. Ford.

After Mr. H. W. Rood became principal of the Red Brick in 1879, he greatly strengthened that phase of the school's offering, and Mr. Manning's school deteriorated.

People of the Bell School District southwest of

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1. Harney, Op. Cit., p. 333.

Omro decided that because of existing disciplinary conditions in the village school they would have Mr. Manning teach in that district. Accordingly, the board, consisting of Andrew Halkney, Q. C. Hale, and J. Bussey, hired Mr. Manning to teach the regular school. During one winter term a class of twelve paid him five dollars a piece to teach bookkeeping two nights a week. The group also bore the expense of lighting. Among those who completed their bookkeeping course under this plan were H. B. Winslow, Fred. Backus, Fred. Lindsey, P. Hale and W. Bussey.

One of the students in Mr. Manning's school became "Railroad Jack" Cooper, the Educated Tramp and Memory Expert. Being of an incorrigible nature, his mother placed him in this school. His time spent in school was just as turbulent, and came to an abrupt end when he broke one of the windows. Expelled from school, he found refuge with friends in Omro. Later he spent some years as a hermit in the woods where he read history, studied music and other subjects of his choice. From then on he gave exhibitions as a memory expert, travelled as a tramp, and when the radio became a popular medium, he became a familiar performer, amazing people with his prodigious memory feats.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Incidents related by Mrs. Minnie Trelevan Morton, a former resident, in whose home he lived for a time.

Bookkeeping continued to be the only commercial subject until a full commercial course was added to the course of study in 1915. This continued until 1919 when it was dropped as a course. Community sentiment developed to point where it was reestablished in 1935. Students who apply themselves to the full course today are fully prepared to handle the ordinary routine of the business office.

With the addition of the Webster Manual Training School in 1906 to the school plant, as described in Chapter III, Omro was able to offer a decidedly enriched course of study. To the cultural was added the practical, and the efficiency of the school increased many fold. As a matter of record, a full twelve year course in manual training was outlined, with the objective as follows:

"The general purpose of the work is to give practice in the use of a variety of tools and materials, to supplement the work of the grades and the high schools, to combine mental and manual work and thus educate the whole individual."<sup>1</sup>

This ambitious program exists today, but not all of it is considered as manual training. For the primary grades paper cutting, clay modeling and weaving were considered as manual training. They do develop manipulative skills, but ordinarily they are a part of a free

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1. Omro Public Schools, Course of Study, The Herald Press, Omro, Wisconsin, 1909, p. 24.

activity period or considered as a part of art work.

Bench work began for the sixth grade boys. This marked their initial use of the new building and its intriguing equipment. The Webster building provided space for a machine shop, mill room, forge room, a dry kiln and space for storing lumber. On the first floor was a drawing room, work bench room, lathe and a recitation room. This extensive amount of equipment has always been an attraction to the boys, and many have received valuable training under capable instructors. In 1941 extensive alterations were made, retaining the necessary features of the whole department, but replacing the machinery with new equipment. In addition, work in electricity, welding and sheet-metal have been added. The shortage of skilled workmen in the present war emergency has extended the shop training to the senior girls in high school. They too will be able to make an effective contribution to the war effort.

The "domestic arts" part of Mr. Webster's will has not been neglected. Contemporary with the manual arts offerings have been those in domestic science. Training in this field began in fourth grade and extended through the twelfth grade. Up to the eighth grade the work was compulsory, and in the high school for the most part of it has been elective. The second floor of the Webster building has a room each for sewing, home nursing, kitchen,

dining room, and bed room, as well as an art room. Any girl who completed the full high school course was firmly grounded in the art of homemaking. The equipment has been changed to keep pace with the improved types of available implements used in modern homes. In the kitchen, for example, electric hot plates replaced the gas plates in 1928. Then in 1940 the kitchen was remodelled to provide electric ranges, sinks and tables in units to resemble model kitchens. Just as girls received training in manual arts, so have groups of boys taken units of cooking in domestic science.

Another vocational subject was added to the course of study shortly after these just described. In a state which has won renown in the dairy industry one would ordinarily expect to find instruction in agriculture an integral part of the school curriculum for a long time. However, it has only been during the past forty years that emphasis has been placed on agriculture in the schools. State Superintendent L. D. Harvey made a study of the teaching of agriculture, domestic science and manual training, and then recommended county schools for instruction in these subjects. This was in 1899, and in 1901 the state legislature authorized the establishment of such schools. In 1905 it became one of the required

subjects to be taught in the rural schools.<sup>1</sup>

The people in Winnebago County, being actively engaged in the dairy industry, became actively interested in the offer of the legislature to provide aid for county agricultural schools. Definite proposals for erecting such a school were advanced by the Webster Manual Training School Board. They offered a site on the south side of the building which they had just caused to be built under the Webster will, along with heat and water facilities. As they had funds to buy equipment for such vocational training they offered to furnish a chemistry laboratory, creamery equipment and any other materials to fully prepare the building for its intended use. Opposition to this proposal developed at Winneconne and the northern part of the county. These people felt that the Ooro schools would develop at the expense of the one at Winneconne. In the struggle for the location of this school in the county board, Winneconne was successful.

"The County School of Agriculture was established in Winnebago County in 1907. Early in January, Hon. S. R. Hicks had addressed the county board on the subject, and the committee appointed to report on the school made a favorable report in March. The offer of Winneconne of \$6,000 and site was accepted and immediate arrangements made to found the school, the building costing \$40,000."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Patzer, Op. Cit., p. 71.

2. Lawson, Op. Cit., p. 190.





in the high school. The addition of this subject was authorized at the annual meeting that summer, and the first class of 10 began under the guidance of Mr. M. W. Vittum, principal that fall. The department has grown in size and usefulness to the community over the succeeding years. This is attested to by the fact that more and more of the farms in the community are being managed and operated successfully by graduates of the department. Figure 1 on page 68 gives a brief review of the instructors and total numbers of scholars enrolled over the ensuing years.

When Federal aid in the form of the Smith-Hughes law was made available through the state's authorizing equal grants, Cairo was one of the schools which qualified. Mr. L. H. Sasman was the instructor when this plan was adopted. Under succeeding Federal aids the next instructor, Mr. R. B. Locke, has conducted many adult classes, both in the agriculture room and in surrounding rural schools. In addition to the agriculture room in the Webster building, classes in that department have access to the other shops in the building, and a shop of their own in the highschool building. This department is the most effective to the boys who attend school, and return to the farms to be the producers of the staff of life with a rich golden spread to put on it.



For the wise execution of any course of study, the administrator and teachers are the responsible agents. One of the major problems in every community where there are schools is the choice of the teacher. For those charged with this responsibility the matter of teacher preparation is and rightfully should be one of the major concerns to keep educational standards high.

Omro's first experience in the field of teacher training failed to yield the anticipated results. When the Board of Regents for Normal Schools was authorized in 1866<sup>1</sup> to receive sums of money and land sites suitable for the erection of normal schools, the village authorities became interested and took action as follows:<sup>2</sup>

"Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Village Board held in Frank's Hall, April 24, 1866.

President in the chair. Members all present but D. Darrow. Motioned and seconded, and carried that the Corporation raise by tax \$10,000 to aid in the construction of a Normal School Building, should the school be located in Omro."

Adjourned.

H. E. Beals  
Village Clerk

Other communities in the state realized the value

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1. Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 116, 1866.

2. Village of Omro, Record Book, 1857-1873. No Publisher (Manuscript). April 24, 1866. A bound volume manuscript record of the Village of Omro kept by the Village Clerk.

and prestige of having such a state institution within their community, and the bidding and political maneuvering was rather spirited. Other nearby cities interested with their respective bids were: Berlin thirty thousand dollars, Waupun twelve thousand, Fond du Lac thirty thousand, Oshkosh thirty thousand, and Neenah and Menasha thirty thousand dollars.<sup>1</sup> Tradition has it that Omro lost to its nearby rival Oshkosh by only a few votes. Mr. Patzer lists the bid of Omro as being "\$30,000 and a site." The difference in amount as originally voted by the board and Mr. Patzer's statement may be explained in the spirited contest by the delegates to secure the school, and also in the language which appears in the village board minutes later that summer:<sup>2</sup>

"Minutes of Special Meeting of Village Board held at the clerk's office July 18, 1866.

Members of the board, all present.

After considering the accounts presented for defraying the expense of sending Normal School delegates to Milwaukee, and of taking the village census for Normal School purposes, it was resolved that the Board had no jurisdiction in the matter."

Adjourned.

H. E. Beals

Village Clerk

The next attempt to secure teacher training facilities for the community proved more successful. Mr. W. E. Hurlbut of Omro, while a member of the State Legislature

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1. Patzer, Op. Cit., pp. 145-146.

2. Village of Omro, Op. Cit., July 18, 1866.

in 1913, initiated and successfully steered through that body an act authorizing the establishment of a department for the training of teachers in high schools in counties where county training schools were not established.<sup>1</sup> The state also was to grant financial aid to such schools.

While returning from Madison via Oshkosh Mr. Hurlbut met Miss Elizabeth King on the interurban car and informed her that she would be the instructor of teacher training in Oshkosh that fall, as the school board (of which he also was a member) was in favor of establishing the course. So Oshkosh became one of the first of twenty-nine high schools in Wisconsin to offer teacher training. As this new course was considered vocational in its nature, space was provided in the Webster building in what is now room K. Later it was moved across the hall into larger quarters.

This course was given in connection with the fourth year of the regular high school course. Among the subjects offered were: Senior Professional English, Penmanship, Psychology, School Management, Course of Study, Rural Economics, and Professional Methods in Reading, Geography, History, Arithmetic, and Elementary Subjects. Children from the grades were used in the practice classes. During the nineteen twenties as the gradual develop-

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1. Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 474, 1913.

ment in the methods of teacher training improved, a change was made in these high school training courses. Four years of high school training became a requirement before entering teacher training courses. The statewide movement to reduce the number of teacher training institutions, and to raise the standards of rural teachers by having them receive two years of training began with the cutting off of state aid to those training schools located in high schools in a county where other state institutions of teacher training were located. Without this state aid the local school board felt that the expense of maintaining this department was too prohibitive. So at the annual meeting of 1929 the department was abolished. Now the majority of the students interested in becoming teachers attend the nearby County Normal at Berlin or the State Teacher's College at Oshkosh.

Figure two on page seventy-three shows the number of graduates from the teacher training department during the fifteen years it was in operation.

Music is a subject which was a part of the school before it was formally introduced in the course of study. That is, school began in the morning with the opening exercises which usually consisted of the reading of a portion of the Bible and a hymn or song. Music instruction was by rote, and was rather limited in scope. Occasionally in

Figure 2. Graduates from the Teacher Training Department, Omro, 1914-1929.

the community some gifted individual would conduct a singing school for adults in the evening. Mr. George Drew, George Braddish and Dr. I. H. Sheerar were leaders of such schools in Omro which often numbered over a hundred scholars. After a winter of study and rehearsals a concert would be given. To be sure that the students received proper instruction early in life Dr. Sheerar often stopped in the morning on the way to his office and con-

ducted the opening music. It was about 1870 that an organ was purchased to be used during this period.

The interest in music which was popularized by World War I and the period of prosperity which followed resulted in the widespread practice of music instructors and supervisors in schools. In 1929 Omro had an instructor devote part time to band and glee club in high school, and since 1935 has had a full time instructor for the upper grades and high school. Music appreciation is also developed by the use of radios which were acquired in 1930. These along with a balloptican and sound movie projector are a part of the equipment provided as teaching aids for both vocational as well as academic subjects.

The course of study for the present year given on the following page reflects the extensive offerings of the school at the present time. Sixteen units of one year per unit are required for graduation, including two units each of science and mathematics, three units of English, and four units of social studies. The impact of the present war has caused a radical change during the second semester. All junior and senior boys are required to have one hour per day each of general shop, machines (consisting of that portion of physics dealing with principles) and physical education. Girls



Course of Study  
1942-43

| Required           | First Year                  | Elective  |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| English            | Agriculture                 |           |
| Citizenship        | Home Economics              |           |
| General Science    | General Shop                |           |
| Physical Education | Algebra                     |           |
| Library Lectures   | Band                        |           |
|                    | Chorus                      |           |
|                    | Second Year                 |           |
| English            | Agriculture                 | Band      |
| World History      | Home Economics              | Chorus    |
| Physical Education | General Shop                | Typing    |
|                    | Algebra                     | Biology   |
|                    | Third Year                  |           |
| English            | Agriculture                 | Band      |
| American History   | Home Economics              | Chorus    |
|                    | General Shop                | Typing    |
|                    | Algebra                     | Shorthand |
|                    | Geometry                    |           |
|                    | Bookkeeping                 |           |
|                    | Physics or Chemistry        |           |
|                    | Fourth Year                 |           |
| Social Problems    | Any of the above electives. |           |
|                    | English                     |           |
|                    | General Mathematics         |           |
|                    | Advanced Algebra            |           |
|                    | Trigonometry                |           |

Latin is omitted for the first time in many years due to no demand.

have invaded the shop courses, a radio code class was introduced, and the emphasis on shop, science and mathematics courses has been directed toward pre-induction preparation. The enrollment has declined approximately fifteen per cent since September, due to the boys entering the armed services, industry or staying home on the farm full time.

Another phase of the school program which does not appear in the formal course of study is the so called extra-curricular activities such as speech, athletics, dramatics, school paper and clubs of various types. Except for occasional oratory and declamation contests with nearby schools, this type of speech work has never been very popular in this school. A brief period of debating was attempted in 1925 to 1927 but was dropped because this type of training could be given within the courses in school itself.

Mr. H. W. Rood organized a literary society when he was principal which continued for many years after he left. A select group of older students met as an organized society one night a week at school under his supervision. Besides a study of the classics, various forms of speech work were practiced and perfected. An appreciation for fine literature was cultivated and has remained an integral part of those who attended its meetings.

About the turn of the present century a period of interscholastic competition in athletics began. Many boys in school at that time were really physically matured young men. There were enough of them to form football and baseball teams which were more than a match for the teams from surrounding high schools and the Oshkosh Normal School. The football team of 1908, for instance, defeated Waupun and Berlin twice, Neenah once, and lost

only to Ripon. Thomas Coats of the class of nineteen hundred and one was the spearhead of an outstanding baseball team. He advanced to professional circles until Connie Mack tendered him a contract with the Philadelphia Athletics. His career was brought to an untimely end in a hunting accident before it reached its zenith. Football was dropped for a period of years, but was revived in 1929, and has continued until the present year. The record of games for this period shows forty-five victories, twenty-five defeats, and five ties. When the Webster building was completed, the upper story was finished as a gymnasium. Basketball took the place of football, and has continued to be played by both the boys and girls. The use of the Legion Hall and the erection of the present gymnasium has been described in Chapter IV.

Dramatics has been limited to occasional pageants, class plays and operettas. Beginning in 1914 "The Winnebago Chier," a printed paper was issued quarterly by the students. Enthusiasm and funds waned, and the paper was discontinued after the war. In 1928, under the supervision of the writer, a mimeographed paper was started called The Review. The next year, under the guidance of Miss Marian Dohner, its name was changed to the Nuntius, and has been issued regularly ever since. A mimeographed review of the year's activities is issued in lieu of a school annual.

Of all the various clubs sponsored under faculty supervision, the Future Farmers of America has been the most successful and has achieved the greatest renown and permanence. Even before the chapter was organized, judging and demonstration teams from the agricultural department had won honors in state competition at Madison and the State Fair at Milwaukee. Aside from any personal satisfaction attending these winnings, they represented one phase of successful teaching. At no time has the emphasis been on winning teams, but rather, that all the boys in the classes should receive equal teaching, and the judging efforts have been a secondary consideration. A few of the highlights over the years are among the following ratings:

- 1924 State Champion Corn Judging Team
- 1925 State Champion Poultry Demonstration Team, State Fair
- 1927 First Soil Demonstration Team, State Fair
- 1930 Future Farmer Charter
- 1932 State Champion Livestock Judging Team
- 1932 National Sheep Judging Team, St. Louis
- 1938 Superior Rating Dairy Cattle Judging Team
- 1939 Superior Fat Stock Judging Team
- 1943 National All-American Holstein Judging Team

As already has been suggested, schools exist for pupil education. The value of a school to the community is determined in part at least by the number of students who avail themselves of the opportunity to use it. For many years the majority of students who graduated from the Oroc High School were village children. As rural

people gradually realized the value of secondary education for their children, they made an effort to send them to school. Oftentimes they stayed with a family in the village, and worked part time to pay for their room and board. Again, two or three roomed together and prepared their own meals of foodstuffs brought from home on Sunday night or Monday morning. Others drove with horse and buggy or sleigh to get to school. The widespread use of the automobile after the World War I made it possible for many more students from a greater area to attend school. Since that time groups of students have driven together from as far as fifteen miles one way to attend school. This has meant a decided increase in the percentage of rural students in school. As a matter of interest, in recent years about two-thirds of the high school pupils are tuition students from the surrounding towns. The consolidation movement in Wisconsin of recent years has resulted in the closing of the King School, adjacent to District Number Five on the west, and the sending of these children into the Caro grades. This has been feasible by the use of buses to transport students to school. Two years ago a private operator began to transport students to school by bus. Last year the school purchased the bus, and the school board hired a driver to operate it. This present year another bus was secured,

and between them they transport over half of the rural students to school. This method has proven to be satisfactory in every respect when compared with the former methods.

All of these facilities and improvements have been made at the expense of the taxpayer. Four examples have been selected to indicate the increase in the amount needed to operate the schools.

The first is the budget of 1855 for the year before the Red Brick was erected. This is shown in Table III and was raised entirely by local taxation.

TABLE III  
SCHOOL BUDGET OF 1855.<sup>1</sup>

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|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Teacher's wages | \$360.00      |
| Fuel            | 20.00         |
| Room Rent       | 32.00         |
| Incidentals     | 20.00         |
|                 | <u>432.00</u> |

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The second example is the expenditures for the year 1877, the first year Caro was a high school under the Free High School law. This is shown in Table IV on page eighty-one. It will be noted that financial aid came from outside of the district, namely two hundred

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1. School District Number Five, 1850-1856, Op., Cit., p. 46.

fifty-nine dollars and fifty-three cents from the state, and three hundred thirty dollars and eighty-five cents from the county, or but nine and seven-tenths per cent of the total budget. Including one hundred thirty dollars and seventy-five cents from tuition this amounts to but eleven and nine-tenth per cent from outside of local taxation.

TABLE IV

SCHOOL EXPENDITURES OF 1877. (SUMMARY).<sup>1</sup>

| Receipts     |                | Expenditures    |                |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Balance 1876 | 1839.24        | Teachers Wages  | 2343.50        |
| State tax    | 259.53         | Janitor's Wages | 142.80         |
| District tax | 3500.00        | New Schoolhouse | 1500.00        |
| County tax   | 330.75         | All other items | 898.41         |
| Tuition      | 130.75         | Cash on hand    | 1175.66        |
|              | <u>6060.37</u> |                 | <u>6060.37</u> |

The third example is the summary of the clerk's annual report for the year ending June 30, 1898 which is given in Table V on page eighty-two. With the increased state and county aids, along with the tuition money, the amount of financial aid from outside of local taxation has increased to thirty-one and five-tenths per cent of the total. A further comparison of Table IV and Table V reveals that the amount spent for the actual running

1. School District Number Five, 1867-1883, Op. Cit., p. 34.

expense of the school was approximately the same. In other words, there was little improvement or addition to the school during the first twenty-five years as a regular high school.

TABLE V  
CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1897-98. (SUMMARY)<sup>1</sup>

| Receipts          |                |                 |                |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| June 1897 Bal.    | 1263.74        | Principal       | 810.00         |
| State Income Fund | 117.02         | Assistant       | 360.00         |
| High School Fund  | 260.00         | Other teachers  | 1314.00        |
| School Tax        | 2400.00        | Janitors        | 297.00         |
| County Money      | 432.51         | Clerk           | 75.00          |
| H.S. Ins.         | 4.80           | Fuel            | 455.17         |
| Co. School Money  | 26.80          | Apparatus       | 31.54          |
| State Income Fund | 306.98         | Supplies & Ins. | 340.28         |
| Tuition           | 543.80         |                 | <u>3682.99</u> |
|                   | <u>5355.65</u> | Cash on hand    | <u>1672.67</u> |
|                   |                |                 | <u>5355.66</u> |

The fourth and last example to show the growth and change in financial affairs of the district is the Financial Statement for the present fiscal year shown in Table VI on page eighty-three. This gives an itemized account of the past year's expenditures, and the estimated budget for the present fiscal year. When compared with Table III in grand total for maintaining a school in Onro the increase is approximately one hundred times the amount needed in 1855. The greater amount of equip-

1. "School Meeting", The Onro Herald, July 6, 1898, p.4.



TABLE VI  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1943-1944.

# Financial Statement

## School District No. 5, Village of Omro

FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1943

### A. EXPENSES OF GENERAL CONTROL

|   |           |  |
|---|-----------|--|
| School census and school elections.....                                   | \$ 79.64  |  |
| Salaries of Board members .....   | 190.00    |  |
| Other expenses of Board, travel, etc. ....                                | 27.55     |  |
| Other expenses of Control including interest on<br>short term loans ..... | 558.52    |  |
| Total .....   | \$ 855.71 |  |

### D. EXPENSES OF INSTRUCTION

|  |             |  |
|--|-------------|--|
| Clerks' salaries in principal's office.....            | 537.70      |  |
| Supplies and other expenses of principals' office..... | 53.74       |  |
| Men teachers' salaries .....                           | 14,269.12   |  |
| Women teachers' salaries .....                         | 14,774.17   |  |
| School supplies .....                                  | 3,636.16    |  |
| Magazines for School library .....                     | 44.29       |  |
| Supplies and expense for library .....                 | 42.55       |  |
| Diplomas and other commencement expense .....          | 52.50       |  |
| Evening and summer session      Adult Classes.....     | 622.15      |  |
| Total .....  | \$34,032.38 |  |

### E. OPERATION OF SCHOOL PLANT

|   |             |  |
|---|-------------|--|
| Janitors' and engineers' salaries ..... | 1,737.45    |  |
| Supplies .....                          | 774.33      |  |
| Fuel .....                              | 1,501.12    |  |
| Power and Light .....                   | 1,263.80    |  |
| Total .....                             | \$ 5,276.70 |  |

### F. MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL PLANT

|  |        |  |
|--|--------|--|
| Repair of buildings and upkeep of grounds.....                     | 88.25  |  |
| Repair and replacement of service systems .....                    | 750.45 |  |
| Repair and replacement of furniture and general<br>equipment ..... | 139.00 |  |

ment and enriched course of study is worth the money expended. Furthermore, whereas one hundred per cent of the 1855 budget was raised by local taxation, only thirty-five and seven-tenths per cent of the present year's budget had to be raised in this manner.

At no time was the problem of meeting these financial requirements an easy task. Opposition always was strong when any appreciable increase was proposed. But the vision of the pioneer has become a reality. May the schools be an everlasting memorial to the people in the community who had the faith and courage to keep them in operation.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ADMINISTRATORS

The men and women among the pioneers who became teachers were truly torchbearers. Theirs was the noble opportunity to carry the feeble flame of knowledge until stronger hands could nourish it to a flaming beacon. As was often the case, some woman gathered the children of the neighborhood and began a school as soon as the first log cabin homes were erected. To their multitudinous tasks the women added the vital one of teaching. Their children were not to be deprived of the opportunity to know how to read and write just because they were being reared in a pioneer settlement.

The men who were teachers occupied a favored position in the community along with other professional or business men. This was particularly true if he could match the other men in the physical activities of community life. His was a golden opportunity to mould the character of the children of the coming generation. In the main, Omro has been fortunate in the choice of the men who guided the destinies of its schools over nearly a century of operation.

Little is known about the instructors during the first ten or twelve years of schools in Omro, except

their name in the records. Mr. Herrick, as has already been mentioned, was a qualified teacher because of his training in a Massachusetts Normal School. He was a man of culture and refinement, a welcome addition to the family fireside. The group looked forward with joy to the period of time when he boarded his time with them. Many of the early teachers taught school for a term or two to help earn some money to acquire land or go into a business. Thus the turn over of teachers was rather frequent.

The first principal of the Red Brick School was Mr. H. Raymond who came from Oshkosh. He taught three terms and was followed by Mr. D. P. Dean. As the principal soon had to have an assistant, Mrs. Dean served in this capacity for the two years her husband was principal. Mr. Furnot who followed served but one year. Boys avoiding punishment would scamper away and climb a tree, with the teacher helpless to follow.

During the next decade two of the outstanding principals served terms which made lasting impressions upon the school and students alike. The first of these was Samuel Shaw who served from 1860 to 1867. Mr Shaw was a strong, good looking young man, with a pleasant personality. He quickly curbed the discipline problem by winning the respect of the boys out on the school play-

ground. He played with them at recess, observed the rules of their games, and when the group went indoors, he stressed the importance of continuing according to the rules of the school. Any boy who tried to climb a tree to avoid punishment found Mr. Shaw clutching at his heels from the limb below. In a few weeks this procedure was not needed. Mr. Shaw was a dramatic reader, and taught his students to read with expression. They looked forward to those occasions when he selected some classic and read to them.

As a result of his efforts the Red Brick became a school which helped to mould character as well as to give instruction in the common subjects. The young men who had a tendency to be trouble makers found in Mr. Shaw a challenge to exert their energies in a more worthwhile manner. In 1868 Mr. Shaw was elected County Superintendent of Schools for Winnebago County. He replaced Mr. John E. Hunger, the first superintendent, who had served from 1861 to 1868. Together these men made the office amount to something in the county.

At an early date, teacher's institutes had been held in various parts of the county. In 1851 about twelve teachers met at Waukau at the suggestion of the Town Superintendents of Utica and Rushford. They discussed methods of teaching the elementary courses, the

relative value of subjects and textbooks. A similar meeting was held a month later at Omro.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Munger and Mr. Shaw made the county unit more effective by holding meetings which included larger groups of teachers. They visited the schools, and the visit of these officials was a regular part of school life for many years. Today, the village school is under the supervision of the state superintendent and inspectors appointed by him, although the county superintendent and supervising teacher pay courtesy visits each year.

The second principal of outstanding caliber was Mr. Orville T. Bright who served but two years, 1868-1870. During this short stay he thoroughly reorganized the course of study on a graded basis. He had been educated in the east and brought with him the latest innovations in education. Mr. Bright was an earnest man and expected each student to do his or her best. He maintained a firm control over the school, meted out adequate justice, and won the everlasting respect and love of his students. The older ones sometimes arranged surprise parties upon him, but never stepped over the line of familiarity to destroy his effectiveness as a teacher.

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1. Robert C. Robertson, The Social History of Winnebago County, Wisconsin 1850-1870, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1939, p. 74.

When he left, the students and community felt they had lost a leader and a true friend.

But Mr. Bright was just entering upon a successful career in education when he left Omro. He went to Chicago where his record grew more impressive as the following indicates:<sup>1</sup>

"In July, 1870, he passed Chicago examination for principals certificate. September 1870, assigned as Principal of the Foster School. June 1886, resigned to become Superintendent of the Englewood district. In 1891 was re-appointed to Chicago schools by annexation and assigned to Englewood High School. December 1, 1891 resigned to become County Superintendent of Schools. March 2, 1903, re-entered the Chicago system as principal of the Doolittle School; March 25, 1908, made District Superintendent. September 14, 1917, elected member of the Board of Examiners, which position he held up to the time of his death on May 30, 1921. From September 10, 1919, until his death he was acting principal of the Harvard Elementary School."

While the author was in fifth grade in the Warren Elementary School in Chicago Mr. Bright visited the school on a tour of inspection. As a testimony to his work at 10720 S. Calhoun Avenue, Chicago today there is the Crville T. Bright Elementary School.

On the front wall of the assembly hall in the Omro High School hangs two pictures, one of Mr. Shaw, the other of Mr. Bright. Thus, in spirit at least, these men are kept before the students as a lasting memento to their

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1. Chicago, Board of Education, Letter to the author dated March 25, 1943.

leadership.

Mr. Charles McStay who succeeded Mr. Bright had a promising career cut short by a tragic accident. On April 8, 1871, in company with Emmet Hicks and Almore Anigo, two sixteen year old students, Mr. McStay had gone across Lake Poygen for some evergreens to use as decorations. While returning, a storm developed and overturned the boat. Mr. McStay encouraged the boys, and helped them to cling to the boat. His exertions proved too much and he sank beneath the waves before they reached shore. The boys were saved by some Indians. Mr. McStay's tragic death was a profound shock to the community, and as would be expected, the school register for that year bears this notation: "School closed-Mr. McStay's funeral."

Another principal who made a favorable contribution was Mr. W. T. Williams, 1873-1875. Mr. Williams was a short, red-headed man who had the use of only one eye. At first sight he failed to make a strong impression. "Was that the best you could do?" was the query of a townsman to one of the board members. "He was the best we could do for the money we had," was the reply.

Mr. Williams was no disappointment as a teacher however. He was a conscientious man, and his opening exercises were very sincere and impressive. He was famil-



lar with the classics and wrote poetry in a manner which impressed his pupils. Years later in 1914 when he returned to the reunion of the Red Brick students he read a long narrative poem of early school days in Onro. "Billy" Williams is fondly remembered by those who sat in his classes.

Mr. Moses W. Rood who became principal in 1879 found matters none too well in school. Discipline problems had been too much for Mr. William's successors. The young men who were in school at that time were as full of life and mischief as young colts, and it took a firm hand to break them into the ways of learning and society. It was during this period that many students left the high school and went to Mr. Manning's private school across the river (described on pages 59-61). Mr. Rood soon reestablished the prestige of the Red Brick and Mr. Manning's school faded into oblivion.

Mr. Rood was a genial gentleman, a scholar, and a community mixer. He evinced a personal interest in each pupil, and all felt that the teaching was directed to each one alone. Mr. Rood missed no opportunity to speak privately with a student in a way to develop a character worthy of respect and emulation. He took classes on field trips searching for specimens for science classes.

Mr. Rood was a man of great vitality and took an active part in community affairs. He was a temperance

worker and very active in church matters as well. He was also a G.A.R. veteran and took an active part in all patriotic ceremonies. Later he became Patriotic Instructor for the State Encampment, and prepared programs for Decoration Day exercises.

Mr. J. B. Babcock, the next principal, was a quiet, dignified man, rather a contrast to Mr. Rood. He had a pleasant personality, however, and was well liked for the two years he was here. Mr. Babcock was very fond of music and stressed its use in school. Students marched to and from the recitation room in the front part of the upstairs by organ music. Girls took turns playing the music for this marching.

Mr. Frank Tucker who succeeded Mr. Babcock was a graduate of the Class of 1882 and returned in 1889 as principal. He was a conscientious teacher, won the admiration of his pupils by his sincerity, and kept the good will of all by his desire to help to them. Mr. Tucker was principal during the time the Edgerton Case resulted in eliminating the Bible reading from public schools of the state. After reading the notice to the students, Mr. Tucker passed the book to the assistant and walked to the rear of the room. After the song had been sung, he said in a voice full of emotion, "You may take your books and pass to class."

Another reaction is contained in this excerpt:

"Mr. Tucker used to open each morning session with a reading from the Bible. Apart from any religious belief, I believe the reading of the Bible in school lent a dignity and solemnity to the occasion and inspired a respect for authority which nothing else did."<sup>1</sup>

The man who served the second longest period as principal was Mr. E. E. Sheldon who filled that office from 1894 to 1908. During his administration the Webster building was erected and the vocational phase of the course of study was added to the curriculum. The adjustment of scholars from the North and East side schools to the new school building was also made at this time. When his services as principal drew to a close The Omro Herald paid him this tribute:

"This is probably Mr. Sheldon's last year here; many will regret that he is not to continue in the work, for all will admit that he has placed the Omro High School in the front rank of schools in the state. As an executive teacher he has no superior."<sup>2</sup>

The present principal, Mr. H. B. Patch, has served since 1915. He has striven to make the school an instrument of service to the students and to the community. The commercial, agriculture and teacher training departments were either started or greatly increased in effectiveness during his period as principal. His ex-

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1. Myrtle Morrison McLeod, Op. Cit., p. 8.

2. "News Notes", The Omro Herald, July 13, 1908, p. 8.

perience as a teacher and county superintendent of schools has enabled him to have a perspective of the whole school pattern from kindergarten through high school. He has skillfully guided the school financial affairs through prosperity and depression. The demands of two world wars have found him making the necessary adjustments in school management with a minimum loss in efficiency. He has a wise understanding of human nature, and is able to give a bit of advice in a telling, effective manner. At a testimonial dinner for twenty-five years as principal held in 1940 many alumni paid tribute to his leadership and service not only to their individual lives, but to the affairs of the community as well.

Space does not permit discussion of each principal. This has not been a purposeful oversight. It is possible that a man who served but one year spoke a word of advice to a student which was the turning point in that individual's life. Such is the responsibility as well as the golden opportunity for all who would be a teacher or an administrator.

TABLE VII  
PRINCIPALS OF OMRO SCHOOLS

---

Red Brick

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Mr. H. Raymond        | 1856-1857 |
| Mr. D. P. Dean        | 1857-1859 |
| Mr. Purmort           | 1859-1860 |
| Mr. Samuel Shaw       | 1860-1867 |
| Mr. Edwards and       |           |
| Mr. J. E. Munger      | 1867-1868 |
| Mr. Orville T. Bright | 1868-1870 |
| Mr. Charles McStay    | 1870-1871 |
| Mr. M. Reed           | 1871-1872 |
| Mr. Lewis Funk        | 1872-1873 |
| Mr. W. Williams       | 1873-1875 |
| Mr. O. A. Perks       | 1875-1876 |
| Mr. C. H. Lewis       | 1876-1878 |
| Mr. A. A. Spencer     | 1878-1879 |
| Mr. H. W. Rood        | 1879-1882 |
| Mr. J. B. Babcock     | 1886-1888 |
| Mr. F. Tucker         | 1888-1892 |
| Mr. F. H. Miller      | 1892-1893 |

Present High School

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Mr. A. H. Kreiling | 1893-1894 |
| Mr. E. E. Sheldon  | 1894-1908 |
| Mr. M. W. Vittum   | 1908-1911 |
| Mr. C. H. Eldred   | 1911-1913 |
| Mr. C. O. Marsh    | 1913-1915 |
| Mr. H. B. Patch    | 1915-     |

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## PASSING THE TORCH

The first schools, scholars, and teachers of Omro are but a memory. Yet from the records there emerges the picture of hundreds of students going forth in all stations of life to the four corners of our great country. Some have accumulated wealth and achieved renown. Among these who have been mentioned at one time or another in Who's Who in America are Mr. Clarence J. Hicks, in the field of industrial relations, Dr. Frederick Tice, eminent in the field of medicine, and Mr. Charles Rosecrans (Ross Crane), artist and chautauqua lecturer. Many others have lived a life of service to society wherever they chose to serve. All voice their appreciation to the community which has always made it possible to receive the necessary training in the fundamentals.

These schools at all times have been kept adequately equipped with the essential apparatus, machinery, and books. Men and women of noble character have been charged with the responsibility of wisely guiding the students in the use of these tools to become members of a democratic society. During the past century these instructors have consistently endeavored to develop the latent talents in each student.

Today, the graduates are confronted with the challenging demands of a world conflict. The freedoms which they have been taught to cherish are in danger. Time will reveal the extent to which these ideals will be preserved.

The Omro schools have been but one unit in a larger pattern of state educational endeavor. Sometimes Omro was one of the first to use an innovation, at other times it has waited until the worth of proposed changes have become apparent. Throughout, one ideal has been paramount, the lamp of knowledge must be kept burning. Men will be free if they are strong; they will be strong if they are free. Free schools are an instrument to perpetuate this ideal. May the people of the community continue to take pride and have faith in this instrument of enlightenment;--- The Schools Of Omro.

## APPENDIX

PERSONS INTERVIEWED ABOUT OMRO  
SCHOOLS AND ADMINISTRATORS

---

Mr. Emerson Bronson  
Mr. W. P. Bussey  
Mrs. M. Ford  
Mr. Lewis Gadbaw  
Mrs. Lewis Gadbaw  
Mr. Edward Harris  
Miss Elizabeth King  
Miss Josephine King  
Mr. R. B. Locke  
Mrs. M. Marsh  
Mrs. Minnie Trelevan Morton  
Mr. H. B. Patch  
Miss J. Sargeant  
Miss B. Shafer  
Mr. Frank Sheerar  
Mrs. Frank Sheerar  
Mr. L. A. Smith  
Mrs. E. Stanley  
Mrs. A. B. Tice



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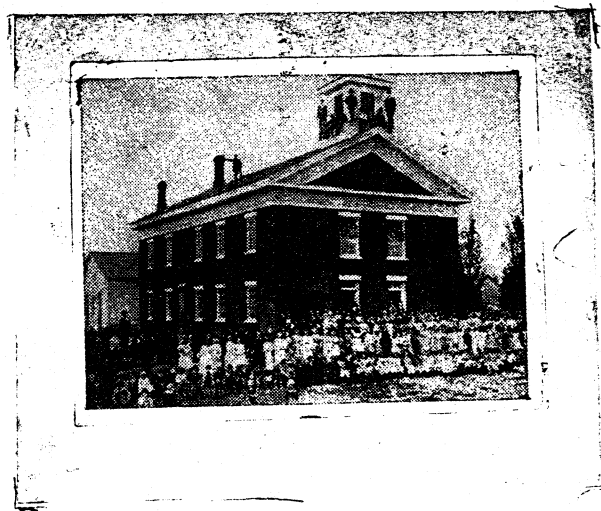
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RED BRICK  
SCHOOL ORG.

OLD RED BRICK ORGANIZATION

Omro, Wisconsin

1901-1962.



Excerpts from Minute book.

## OLD RED BRICK ORGANIZATION

The book containing the minutes of the Red Brick School organization from 1901 to 1962 was loaned<sup>me</sup> by Roy Treleven in March of 1979. The following data is taken from the records.

A synopsis of the first years of the meetings in the front of the book read as follows:

### HISTORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE OLD RED BRICK ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS

- 1901- Aug. 20-The Launch Irma was chartered by The Emmet Hick's, John Challoners and Wagstaff's. Invited those available old schoolmates. Many had not met since their school days at Omro. A ride to Tustin for a fish dinner then to Omro for a chicken supper, all visiting the old school location. Seventeen present. Discussed how many could be got together next year. Men treated with stick candy and gum.
- 1902-Day meeting with Cora McAllister Evans, Waupaca, Wis. Supper with Jennie Ferris Burr at Stevens Point, Wis.
- 1902 & 3- Winter-Evening with Edna Crawford Tuller-Neenah road.
- 1903- At Omro - "The Three Ellas", <sup>Edna</sup> Drew X Stanley, Sheldon\*Hicks.
- 1904- Dinner, Addie Hicks Challoner.  
Supper, Elma Lowd Gilkey.
- 1906- At Chicago with Lulu Munger Jones.
- 1907- First big meeting at Omro school building.  
This the beginning of the meetings once a year in June.
- 1905- At Ella Hicks 4th of July - Omro.

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That they were still school students at heart, the following introduction is found on page 1.

#### "OMRO SCHOOL BOYS & GIRLS CLUB"

This club is made up of a few of the Boys and Girls who went to school in the "Old Red Brick" School House in Omro together with a few others who have been "taken in for better or worse, through sickness or health, until death do us part".

These minutes are a record of the various meetings the Club has had as recorded by the Sec. Elma Lowd Gilkey.

-----

On page 2 is the account of the first meeting--

August 22, 1901.

In response to a happy idea of some one, and a kind invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Emmet Hicks, Mr and Mrs. Wm. Wagstaff and Mr. and Mrs. John Challoner the following party met at Wm Wagstaffs and proceeded to Mc-Millens dock.

Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Hicks  
Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Wagstaff  
Mr. and Mrs. John Challoner

Mr. and Mrs. Rodolph Hicks  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stanley  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jackson Tuller  
 Mrs. Cora McAllister Evans  
 Mrs. Lulu Jones (Munger)  
 Mrs. Herbert Reed  
 Mrs. Jennie Ferris Burr  
 Mrs. Addie Hicks Challoner  
 Mrs. Elma Lowd Gilkey  
 Miss Ella V. Hicks

The minutes continued with the entertainment and good time enjoyed during the day. The next few meetings were attended by many of the original group with a few new names added each year.

Aug 27, 1902

Following responded sometime during the day to invitations from Mr. and Mrs. John Evans and Mr. and Mrs. Emmous Burr.

Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Hicks  
 " " " Rodolph Hicks  
 " " " John Challoner  
 " " " W.J. Wagstaff  
 " " " Jackson Tuller  
 " " " Emmous Burr  
 " " " John Evans  
 Mrs. Addie Challoner  
 " Elma Lowd Gilkey  
 Miss Ella Hicks  
 " Annie Ferris

Jan 2, 1903

Following answered to an impromptu gathering at Omro

Mr. and Mrs. Wagstaff  
 " " E.R. Hicks  
 " " J. Challoner  
 " " J. Tuller  
 Addie Challoner  
 Lulu Munger Jones  
 Mrs. Elma Lowd Gilkey  
 Ella Hicks  
 Ella Sheldon  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stanley

Aug 7, 1903

On invitation to old home town of Omro by the "3 Ellas"--Ella Sheldon, Ella Stanley and Ella Hicks.

An attempt was made for a permanent organization and to elect officers. It would seem that E. R. Hicks acted as Pres. and Elma Lowd Gilkey, Sec.

Those present were:

Ella Hicks  
 Ella Sheldon  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank (Ella) Stanley  
 " " W. Wagstaff  
 " " J. Challoner  
 " " E.R. Hicks  
 " " Jackson Tuller  
 " " John Evans



Mrs. Lulu Munger Jones  
 " Della White Adams  
 " Addie Hicks Challoner  
 " Elma Lowd Gilkey  
 " Ella Snowden Moses  
 " DeEtta Bushnell Evans  
 Charlie Remington.

Feb 18, 1904

In response to an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Jackson Tuller the following were present:

Mr. and Mrs. John Evans  
 " " E.R. Hicks  
 " " John Challoner  
 " " W. Wagstaff  
 " " F. Stanley  
 Mrs. Ella Sheldon  
 Mrs. Florence Scovil  
 Mrs. Addie Challoner  
 Mrs. Elma Lowd Gilkey

July 28, 1904

At an invitation from Addie Hicks Challoner and Mrs. Elma Lowd Gilkey, a group met at Addie's. At this meeting it was voted to limit the membership to a club of 20. E.R. Hicks, President and Elma Lowd Gilkey, Secretary.

Those attending were:

Mr. and Mrs. E.R. Hicks  
 " " John Challoner  
 " " W. Wagstaff  
 " " F. Stanley  
 " " John Evans  
 " " G.F. Gilkey  
 Mrs. Addie Challoner  
 " Lulu Jones  
 " Emmous Burr  
 " Florence Scovil  
 Ella Hicks  
 Ella Sheldon  
 Mrs. Julia Hale  
 Mrs. Annie Root

Aug 18, 1905

Part of the original club of school boys and girls met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E.R. Hicks at Oakwood. The impromptu invitations found many with other plans. Those present were:

Mr. and Mrs. E.R. Hicks  
 " " W.J. Wagstaff  
 " " John Challoner  
 " " Scovil  
 Mrs. Addie Challoner  
 Miss Ella Hicks  
 " Ella Sheldon  
 Mrs. Lulu Munger Jones

One guest with us, Mrs. Luther Reed and a letter read from Mr. O.T. Bright our former teacher and the Sec. was to invite him to be with us at no distant day. The officers were the same as the last meeting.

Oct 28, 1905

This was a Red Letter Day for the High School boys and girls with O.T. Bright together with many other former students and teachers of Omro High School met at Omro. A picture of the Old Red Brick school was presented to Mr. Bright by Mr. Hicks.

Those present were:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| O.T. Bright                                      | James Russell                           |
| Mr. and Mrs. E.R. Hicks                          | Almira Royce                            |
| " " John Challoner + Mrs. <i>Eddie Challoner</i> | Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stanley              |
| Mrs. Elma Lowd Gilkey                            | Lutheria Adams                          |
| " Orissa Harvey                                  | Sarah Heyward Ross                      |
| " Millard Walker                                 | Mr. and Mrs. Sennett Pingry             |
| " Julia Johnson                                  | Edith Edwards                           |
| " Lizzie Jewell Johnson                          | Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Putnam all of Omro |
| Miss Emily Webster                               | Rose Rowell, Milwaukee                  |
| Mrs. Rose Welby                                  | Hattie Foote Davis, Berlin              |
| " Senas Coe                                      | Eliza Kimball Palfrey, Waukau           |
| Mr. and Mrs. John W. Challoner                   | Guy Vandoren, Birnamwood                |
| " " Chas. Pelton                                 | Cora McAllister Evans, Waupaaa          |
| Rev. and Mrs. Dennison                           | Clara McAllister Huie, Neenah           |
| Mrs. Hiram Webster                               | Frank Charlesworth, Kaukauna            |
| Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cole                          | Mrs. Mary Wood, Idaho.                  |
| Mrs. Libbie Hough                                |   |
| Ella Sheldon                                     |   |
| Ella Hicks                                       |   |
| Persis Shufelt Augur                             |   |
| Nancie Ames Cady                                 |   |
| Mrs. H. H. Shafer                                |   |
| Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Scovil-                      |   |

~~Mary Smith~~

Aug 17 - 18, 1906

Several of the old school friends were summoned by Mr. John E. Munger and sister Julie (Lulu) Jones to dine with them, in Chicago. 8 responded to the invitation.

There is no account of any meetings held during 1907 and 1908.

June 18, 1909 meeting at Omro the following enrolled for the day:  
O. (Orville) T. Bright, a former Red Brick principal and also taught during 1868, 69 and 70.

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| R.L. Cook, M.D.           | Minnie Burnham Reed  |
| Elma Lowd Gilkey          | E. A. Reed           |
| Maria Steele Walker       | Madge Shafer Ford    |
| Low Laiten                | Minnie Morton        |
| Mrs. Nora Root Laiten     | Ella V. Hicks        |
| W.W. Kimball              | Frank Cole           |
| Ella Drew Stanley         | Bella Walker Cole    |
| Cary Bishop               | Josie Bushnell Covey |
| Cora Drew Shipman         | Mrs. M.E. Samphier   |
| William J. Wagstaff       | H.A. Hobart          |
| John D. Treleven          | Lutheria Adams       |
| Ann Burnam Treleven       | Almira Hobart        |
| Nettie Hamilton Fraleigh  | Lutheria Adams       |
| Mrs. Flora Henry Hamilton | Almira Hobart        |
| <i>Annie Natchenson</i>   | Chas Bunker          |
| Maggie Shepherd Pelton    | Jennie Allen Palfrey |
|                           | Mrs. C. A. Russell   |

*Minnie Smith*

Mrs. C.A. Russell  
 Mrs. Hannah Underwood Shafer  
 Mr. and Mrs. E. Sargeant  
 Louisa M. Webster  
 Mrs. Carol Gibbs Carter  
 Mrs. Cora McAllister Evans  
 John H. Evans, Jr.  
 Addie Hicks Challoner  
 Emmett R. Hicks and  
 Cynthia Reed Hicks  
 Geo. B. Welby  
 Mrs. Rose Allen Welby  
 Geo. M. Brooks  
 Eva Carter Brooks  
 Helen M. Sawyer  
 Nora Barnes  
 Albert Ross  
 Nina Wilson Hershorn  
 Mary Russell Root  
 Nancy Ames Cady  
 John Challoner  
 Myra Samphier Challoner  
 Joseph Alger  
 Persis Shufelt  
 Addie Laiten Pingry  
 Sennett Pingry  
 Chas A. Russell  
 Ella J. Sheldon  
 T.L. Smith  
 Minnie Ham  
 Lottie Price Williams  
 Eva Calhoon Day  
 Della Ewers Calhoon  
 Agnes McGuire Flanigan  
 Elizabeth P. Smith  
 Mrs. Nellie Smith Cameron  
 Mrs. Bertha Beebe Kennedy  
 Mrs. Lizzie Jewell Johnson  
 Mrs. Nora Craig Snidder  
 Katherine C. Smith  
 Emma Shelton Brooks  
 Mrs. L.S. Hicks  
 Levi S. Hicks  
 Sarah Hallman Muzzy  
 Fanny Marty Lasher  
 Grace Bradley Lavisier  
 Ella Richards Bradley  
 Allie Jewell Walker  
 Miller T. Walker  
 Katherine Dent  
 Tilly Johnson Smith  
 Bertha Scram Wagstaff  
 Mrs. W.W. Race  
 Mrs. Almira Royce  
 Mrs. Hattie Foote Davis  
 Mrs. L.C. Booth  
 Mrs. I.H. Sheerar (Josephine)  
 Mrs. Etta Stanton Root

Myron Samphier  
 Belle Hoover  
 Jura Pingry Freese  
 Matilda Dunning  
 E.A. Tanner Treleven  
 Edith Treleven  
 Florence Treleven  
 Gertrude Hanson  
 Katherine Winslow  
 Mrs. T. Timmerman

-----

A special car (interurban) left Oshkosh for Omro at 9:15 and about 30 were there to take it.

E.R. Hicks presided at the meeting.  
 Mrs. Gilkey, Secretary.

Jan 26, 1910

A picnic supper was held at Ella Sheldon's, Seward Benedict of Hancock, Iowa was the guest of honor. Others were--

Mr. and Mrs. John Challoner

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stanley

Mr. and Mrs. Myron Samphier

Cynthia Hicks

Minnie B. Reed

Ella Hicks

Ella Sheldon

Mrs. Bertha S. Wagstaff

Mrs. Elma L. Gilkey.

~~June 26, 1910~~

~~Approximately 500 invitations were sent out and approximately 200 were present. At first the club tried meeting twice a year, but cold-weather meetings were finally cancelled. Then they met each year for awhile. But this year of 1910 they decided to meet biennially.~~

June 26, 1910

A meeting by invitation with the Oshkosh people coming to Omro by special car. They went to the school grounds where the reunion was held. At this meeting it was voted to hold another meeting in 1912 and not wait 5 years as previously voted. John Challoner was elected Pres. and Mrs. Gilkey, Sec. and Treas.

1912 date not specified. 400 invitations were sent out and approximately 200 were present. For the next year W.J. Wagstaff was elected Pres., and Mrs. Winslow Treas. with Mrs. Gilkey Sec. The meeting closed by singing "God Be With You Till We Meet Again". And all future meetings closed with the same song.

July 1, 1914

250 were present. The Pres. was E.R. Hicks and the Sec, Mrs. Gilkey. Officers for the next meeting were Mary Challoner Boyd, Sec. and Treas. with Will Kimball as Pres.

June 29, 1916. Mr. Roland Reed of Ortonville, Minn. sent a gift to the Ass'n of his famous large Indian photograph called "Indian Fishing". It was presented by E.R. Hicks and accepted by Mr. Patch, Prin. of the High School in behalf of the school.

The Smith sisters quartette, well known in Omro, and on the program for nearly every meeting in the future, sang selections. They were Harriett, Elizabeth, Anne and Katherine Carol. Sometimes a sextette with sisters Jule and Nellie Cameron.

New officers elected were Pres. Miller Walker; V. Pres. E.R. Hicks; Sec and Treas Mary C. Boyd.

June 27, 1918. 125 answered roll. New officers were Pres. Chas. A Russell, Winneconne; V. Pres. Louis P. Morton, Omro; Sec and Treas, Mary Boyd, Oshkosh.

July 3, 1920. 211 were present. New officers elected were: Cary Bishop, Pres.; T.L. Smith, Oshkosh, V. Pres.; Mary Boyd, Sec and Treas.

A portrait of Samuel Shaw, former Prin. was presented to the school, by E.R. Hicks and accepted by Mr. Hurlbut in behalf of the school.

June 22, 1922. Approximately 200 present. New officers elected were Ed Harr Pres.; Dan Cady, V. Pres.; Mary Boyd, Sec and Treas.

June 27, 1924. The 11th Biennial Reunion of "Old Red Brick". 5 had attended the school 72 years ago and 49 who went to it 50 years ago. A picture of Mr. Bright given by Mrs. Bright and presented by Cora McAllister Evans to the school was accepted by H.B. Patch, school Principal.

New officers elected - Frank L. Smith, Pres. ; Cora McAllister Evans, V. Pres. Mary Boyd, Sec and Treas.

A committee was named to form a constitution and by-laws for the Ass'n. Their report--Name; The Omro Old Red Brick

Place; The Omro High School

Time; To be held biennially 2 days in the last week of June.

Election of officers; To be held at each meeting consisting of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer to be chosen at the P.M. session.

Fees and Dues; No membership fee or dues to be charged but a collection to be taken to finance the same.

Program; To be arranged for, each session by the officers of the Ass'n.

Committee--Frank L. Smith, Cary Bishop, and Emmett R. Hicks.

Accepted by vote of members.

50 letters and telegrams were read from those unable to attend the meeting "Whipoorwill Song" was sung by the Smith Sisters quartette and thereafter was usually requested all during the future meetings.

June 29, 1926. 49 of those present were born in Omro. The number attending was not noted. W.T. Williams read his poem. Over 500 were invited to the meeting. Officers elected for next meeting were: Cora McAllister Evans, Pres.; Minnie T. Morton, V. Pres.; Mary Boyd, Sec and Treas. *with N.W. Post - Omro Herald issue of 6/23/32*

June 29, 1928. 123 answered roll call. New officers elected--Pres. Will Hollister; V. Pres. Ella Stanley; Sec and Treas, Mary Boyd.

June 26-27, 1930. 14th Biennial meeting. This year Minnie T. Morton led the community singing with Doris Jenkins at the piano. Officers elected-- E.F. Shafer, Pres.; Cynthia Reed Hicks, V. Pres.; Madge Shafer Ford, Treas.; Ella V. Hicks, Sec. Invocation was by Rev. Thomas W. North of the Presbyterian church. Address of welcome by H.B. Patch, Principal of the High School and also Chm. of the village board. The response was by Charles Rosencrans. He an Omro boy nationally known as "Ross Crane", lecturer and entertainer. A Welcome address and Response was always given at meetings.

Roll call numbered 123. An original poem ~~by~~ entitled "School Days of the Old Red Brick" by Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Knoll, was recited by her. The Smith Sisters quartet accompanied by Mrs. Leo Marshall on the zither sang "When We All Come Back Again" with a medley for an encore.

At all the meetings were speeches by members during the P.M. and evening. The collection this year amounted to \$61.76.

Bills as follows-- Geo. G. Renneker Co. for 700 books (song?) printed, bound and stitched---- \$28.75

Type setting extra --- 21.00

Mrs. Stanley postage and c. 15.00

Geo. E. Morton, balance on

gift to Mr. Rood --- 5.53

Castle Printing Co. 14.50

At each meeting was always an Invocation and Benediction given, a Welcome and a Response, and closing by singing "God Be With Us Till We Meet Again". When held two days, the last day was a picnic.

June

June 23-1932. Pictures of 1926 gathering with H.W. Rood

June 27-28, 1932. 140 were present. 8 who had attended from 1860-1870. 22 who attended from 1870-1880. New officers were-- Pres. Stebbin Carter; V. Pres. Elizabeth Smith Knoll; Treas. Elizabeth King; Sec. Josephine King.

June 21-22, 1934. 180 present, more than 50% were from out of town. 19 present who attended from 1860-1870. 33 from 1870-1880. 2 before 1860. Their names were not recorded.

New officers were--Frank Sheerar, Pres.; Mae Barnett Marsh, V. Pres.; Josephine King, Sec.; Elizabeth King, Treas.

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Treasurer report--Bal. on hand | \$3.82       |
| Collections -                  | 31.69        |
| Total -                        | 35.51        |
| Expenses - - -                 | 21.95        |
|                                | <u>13.56</u> |

A tree was dedicated to Mr. Rood in Cushing Memorial Park near Delafield and given by Old Red Brick.

Dr. McAllister had given the land on which the O.R.B. stood. He was the grandfather of Nina Huie. He was also the first Postmaster of Omro, and the first Representative to the State Legislature.

An unusual and quite remarkable number on the program was the giving of the long poem, "The Diver" or Diner? by Schiller and translated by Bulwer Lytton, by Mr. L.A. Smith, who had learned the poem 70 years ago under the direction of Mr. Shaw, teacher.

June 25-26, 1936. About 80 present for the dinner. Many more for the meeting in the P.M. and evening.

Omro High Alumni had been invited to join ranks with the O.R.B. and a large number accepted the invitation. Minor Harris presented the acceptance of the invitation for the Alumni Ass'n. Royal Tice, Pres. of the class of '36 pledged to continue the spirit of the O.R.B. and the older Alumni.

A picture was presented by Mr. Williams and turned over to the High School Prin. to be hung in the High School building.

New officers were Pres. - Ross Crane; V. Pres., Harriett Ross; Sec. Elizabeth King; Treas. Parker Bussey.

There were 79 present who had actually attended the Old Red Brick school.

Members deceased since the last meeting were--

Mrs. Elizabeth Brogden Blackburn

Mrs. Maria Barnard

Effie Gray Berry

Dan Blish

Fred Booth

Mrs. Clara Hanson Chappelle 4/2/36.

Frank Cole

J.B. Covey

Dan Cronk

Erie Gerard

Harry Gray

Leo G. Hale

Olin B. Lewis

George Lindsay

Mrs. Mary Hurley Larrabee

Mrs. Millie Booth Putnam

Georgia Pickett

Warren C. Phillips

Rolland Reed

Myron Samphier

Mrs. Cora Phillips Skepper 2/8/32.

Mrs. Emily Bibby Shelp

Frank Stanley

Mrs. Addie Darrow Thrall

Mrs. Lillian Goodwin Tugaski

Edward Treleven 12/30/34.

Wm. J. Wagstaff

Fred Warfield

Chauncey Whitman

July 1-2, 1938. Roll call noted that 25 attended Old Red Brick previous to 1880. 23 previous to 1890. 26 previous to 1894, and 4 attended 76 years before. The rest of those present attended after 1894.

31 members had passed on since the 1936 meeting.

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Ada Ames                       | Ella Augur Hicks                                  |
| Martha Shelp Bennett           | Hattie <del>H</del> allum Hirst ( <i>Hallum</i> ) |
| Seward Benedict                | Walter Kitchen                                    |
| Will Bishop                    | Mary Flynn Kranz                                  |
| Katherine Fowler Bradley       | Ida E. Locke                                      |
| M. S. Carter (Maynard Stebbin) | Isabelle V. Mills                                 |
| Ollie Calhoun Curtis           | Edward Oatman                                     |
| Robt. Dent                     | Lewis Morton                                      |
| Eva Flanagan                   | Margaret Shephard Pelton                          |
| Frank Fowler                   | Mary Russell Root                                 |
| Floyd Cross                    | Mrs. W. W. Race                                   |
| Emma Poler Hecker              | Lulu Shaw   |
| Wm Heffron                     | Rena Thrall Riddle                                |
| Hollis Howard                  | Nettie H. Schloerb                                |
| Minnie Ham                     | Ernest Shafer                                     |
|                                | Ellis Thompson                                    |

New officers elected were G.E. Morton, Pres.--Mrs. H.B. Winslow, V. Pres.--Mrs. Mae Marsh, Sec-- W.P. Bussey, Treas.

July 5-6, 1940. 75 attended the dinner. There were 99 present in the P.M. 6 had attended before 1880. They were--

L.A. Smith (Capt. Lewis)  
Chas Russel  
Cynthia Reed Hicks  
Olive L. Wilson  
Emma Reed  
T.J. Thompson

This year 6 Smith Sisters sang at the meeting. Officers elected were-- Pres. Alfred M. Lewis; V. Pres Elizabeth Knoll; Sec Mae Marsh; Treas Parker Bussey.

Deceased since 1938 were--

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Gaylord Barnes                                 | Ray Oaks                |
| Cary Bishop, Sr.                               | Clara Davis Pratt       |
| Fannie Wilson Brand                            | Jennie Goggins Parson   |
| Charles Carter (1932)                          | Frank Powers            |
| Lewis Campbell                                 | Sennett Pingry          |
| Lillian Felker Crane                           | Dr. Wm Reed             |
| Jessie Bradish Covey ( <i>Mrs Joe</i> )        | Annie Cundy Reed        |
| Wm. Clifford                                   | Sadie Baster Race       |
| John Devine                                    | Ida Gray Rhodes         |
| May Augur                                      | Fred Simmons            |
| Kemper Goss                                    | Ephraim Stanton         |
| Selwin Goodwin                                 | Dr. Leon Stanton        |
| Emma Johnson Grossman                          | Wm Foster Thompson      |
| Myra S. Challoner                              | Helen Sawyer            |
| James Edick                                    | Ida Blanchard           |
| Geo. Luscomb                                   | Cora Goodwin Washington |
| Mary <del>Monney</del> <i>Mulhousen Hurley</i> | Millar Walker           |
| Freeman Marshall                               | Charles West            |
| Frank Marty                                    | Elizabeth Downs Wilcox  |
| Bessie Myers Mathie                            | Henri Winslow           |
| Louie Holmes Miner                             | Archie Larrabee         |
| Ernest Merrill                                 | Charles Marshall        |

## Deceased members since 1940--

Sarah Snowdon Arnold  
 Charles Barnard  
 Eva Barnett Brockway  
 Ernestine Gripentrog Bunker  
 Sadie Campbell  
 Helen Cady  
 Alice Richardson Churchhouse  
 Josephine Bigelow Edwards  
 Thomas Flynn  
 Frank Gray  
 Warren Hart  
 Meda Davis Hickok  
 Ella V. Hicks  
 Nina Huie  
 Wm C. Hollister  
 Fred Kutchen  
 Simon LeRoy  
 Ward Mallory  
 Nora Blumer Mayborn  
 Sarah Hallum Muzzy

Mary McClain McNutt  
 Emma Reid  
 Sadie Hamilton Rosenberry  
 Janie Lowd Root  
 Anna Lowd Root  
 Lottie Lake Rothman  
 A.B. Russell  
 Stella Cady Samuelson  
 Jay Smith  
 John Thrall  
 Jesse Turner  
 Thomas J. Thompson  
 Bertha Scram Wagstaff  
 Josephine Winchester Widmer  
 Ella Snowdon Moses  
 Mary Staley Reed  
 Marilla Calking Reed  
 Williams Iams  
 Ella Barnes Lindsey

June 26-27, 1942. There were 57 to the dinner. It was a rather cool day so they met at the Baptist church auditorium.

87 registered and 32 were from out of town

New officers elected were--Pres. Elizabeth Knoll; V. Pres. Luella Darrow; Sec Josephine King; Treas Parker Bussey.

June 30-July 1, 1944. War-time restrictions did not dampen the pleasure of the occasion.

Deceased members since 1942 meeting were:

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Joe Cady                  | Hattie Young Bunker         |
| Harvey Sargent            | Fred Kutchin                |
| Ernest Hicks              | James Powers                |
| Maria Parker Bronson      | Chas Russell                |
| Elizabeth Barnard Luscomb | Gertrude Steele Silverthorn |
| Clyde B. Davis            | Irving Lowd                 |
| Henry Bloomer             | Chester H. Rogers           |
| Elmer Cope                | Cynthia Reed Hicks          |
| Simeon Barnard            | Milo Kutchin                |
| Bridget Geraghty Keefe    | Sadie Campbell              |
| Elnora Barnes             | Ada Morrison Race           |
| Lena Howard Butler        | Frank Owells                |

New officers elected were --Pres. Elizabeth Knoll; V. Pres W.D. Peterson; Sec Jennie Carver Mackenzie; Treas Parker Bussey.

July 10-11, 1947. There must have been some doubt as to the feasibility of future meetings for after a general discussion the members decided to continue the meetings. In the evening songs were sung by L.A. Smith, 94 years old, and Ella Drew Stanley 86 years. The attendance was not as large as usual.

Deceased members from 1944 to 1947 were:

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Eugene Ames            | Anna Hurley Giles      |
| Ghas Barnett           | Louis C. Gadbaw        |
| Emogene Beals Booth    | Helen Glines Johnson   |
| Ethel Babcock Brown    | Mae Lake Harvey        |
| Fidelia Bailey Bradley | Fannie Taylor Campbell |
| Allison Buck           | Lizzie Crawford Smith  |
| Amasa Campbell         | Howard Reed            |



Ernest Sargent  
 Katherine Carroll Smith  
 C.E. King  
 Alice Jewell Walker  
 Chas Reed  
 Olive Langdon Wilson  
 Harriett Shipman Ross  
 Myra Day Ulrich  
 Parker Bussey  
 Herbert Marshall

Wm R. Brown  
 Carrie Fowler Brazee  
 Lillian ~~Demmon~~ *Demmon*  
 Josie Cramer Clemans  
 Elizabeth Downs Wilcox  
 Alice Bicknell Eveleigh  
 Wilbur J. Pine  
 Frederic Thompson  
 Dell Woodbury

New officers were -Geo E. Morton Pres; Wm Treleven, V. Pres; Grace Carter, Sec; Elizabeth King, Treas.

Deceased between 1947-48:

James Lindsey  
 Grace Demmon  
 Ada Smith Chatterton  
 Lizzie Treleven Barnett  
 Harvey Sargent  
 Mrs. Judson C. Owells  
 Mrs. Eliza Haskins Gadbaw Tice

Deceased from 1948-49:

Myrtle Pole Durant  
 Herbert Angevine  
 Edgar Harris (1949)  
 May Barnett Marsh  
 Edna Lowe  
 Wilmer Smith

July 2, 1948. There were about 70 in attendance and a goodly number of these came from a distance.

One guest in particular was Susie Scott Kirkpatrick of Denver, Colo, the daughter of H.C. Scott who was the donor of the ground upon which our beautiful little Scott Park is located.

Three oldest were 98, 95, and 89, but their names not recorded. Same officers were elected except Wm Treleven who did not wish to serve again as Vice Pres., Alva Shephard accepting the office.

A one act play, "The Partridge Case" written in observance of our State's centennial and by Mariam Smith and produced by the local Odd Fellow's and Rebekah Lodges as their offering.

List of deceased members read July 1, 1949:

Herbert Angevine  
 Myrtle Polar Durant  
 May Barnett Marsh  
 Edwin Harris  
 W.D. Peterson ~~Maurine? Bradish Miller~~  
~~Maurine? Bradish Miller~~  
*Mamie*

Edna B. Lowd  
 Lizzie Treleven Barnett  
 Josephine McGuire Earle  
 Gertrude Darrow Thrall  
 Elizabeth Young Marshall

July 1, 1949. About 60 were present. When a pupil was late all sang "Tardy Scholar is your name", and the culprit was in disgrace.

New officers elected were Pres, Will Merrill; V. Pres Rachel Leroy Kloen; Sec Elizabeth Knoll; Treas Elizabeth King.

July 7-8, 1950. Those deceased since the last reunion--  
 Alva Shephard Almon King  
 Will Hallenbrck Capt. Louis Smith  
 Eugene Gadbow Ina Ames Winslow  
 Gertrude Wiles Cundy Nellie Smith Cameron

July 6-7, 1951. From 75 to 199 in attendance.

A duet sung by Elizabeth Knoll and Harriett Hinderman.  
 New officers were Pres Rob't Fowler; V. Pres Will Merrill; Sec Grace Carter;  
 Treas Josephine King.

June 27-28, 1952. It was back in 1947 it was decided to meet annually. This  
 year about 60 members were in attendance.

13 members were reported as deceased since the last meeting.

James Everts  
 Chas Kramer  
 Hattie Chase Hotchkiss  
 Clara Rogers Wolff  
 Mrs Nora Gauslin Ward  
 Arthur Lindsay  
 Nellie Smith Cameron  
 Capt. Louis A. Smith  
 Etta Hough  
 Lillian Gilbert Coats  
 Juree Pingry Frees

New officers elected were: Pres. Carroll C. Carter; V. Pres Clayton W.  
 Stearns; Sec Grace Carter; Treas Josephine King.

July 10-11, 1953. Dinner was served by the Social Workers of the Baptist  
 Church. \$1.25 a plate of Baked ham, mashed potatoes, slaw, gravy, rolls,  
 butter, pickles, jelly, lemon pie and coffee.

Deaths reported since the last meeting were:

F.U. Day Lulu Bartlett Orr  
 Harry Sheldon Frances King Wilson  
 Bertha Beebe Kennedy Stephen Staley  
 Mildred Taylor Charlesworth

(Hosea W. Rood, principal at one time.)

Three Smith sisters sang at this meeting, Elizabeth Knoll, Harriett Hinderman,  
 and Juel Smith. There were 67 present at the picnic in the park on the 11th.

New officers for 1954 were: Pres. Carroll Carter; V. Pres Clayton Stearn  
 Sec Mrs. Ida May Bower; Treas Mrs. Emily Sheerar.

July 8,9,10, 1954. Dinner was served by the Ladies of the Presbyterian church  
 Menu-- roast beef, salmon loaf, whipped potatoes, corn, cabbage salad,  
 pickles, rolls and butter, coffee and blueberry pie. Price \$1.25.

Roll call of graduates of the Old Red Brick and present school. --

1885 - Wm Treleven  
 1891 - A. B. Treleven  
 1884-86 - Geo Morton  
 1899 - Carroll Carter and  
 E. Grant Smith  
 1895 - Mary Wilcox Sullivan, Agnes McQuay Kelley, and Winnifred Root Sawyer.  
 1896 - Will Merrill  
 Elizabeth Smith Knoll  
 1902 - Grace Carter  
 Mabel VanGilder Smith.

1904 - Kate Barden  
 1906 - Eva Bussey Hankey  
 1909 - Mary Roat  
 1910 - Quincy Danforth + *Jennie Safford Danforth*  
 1911 - Madge Russell White and Ida May Davis Bower.  
 1912 - Emma Stanley.

Deceased since the last meeting:

Libby Price Williams  
 Clara King Goss  
 Frank B. Sheerar  
 Dr. Frederick Tice  
 Jennie Sargeant  
 Mard J. Gummer  
 Lot Maitland

Lulu Bartlett Orr  
 Anna Doughty Robinson  
 Harriett Ferris Arthur  
 Addie Stearns Flansburg  
 Myrtle Pierce Miller  
 Madge Shafer Ford

July 9, 1954. The "Story of Our Beginnings" by Mrs. Ella Stanley and read by her daughter Emma was part of the program. It told of the first meeting in 1901 at Tustin. The 1904 excursion to Oshkosh and the 40 year prophecy of 1914, which expressed the hope that reunions would continue 40 years hence. Officers for the next year were: Pres. Frederick Bennett; V. Pres Ray Hoeft; Sec Ida May Bower; Treas Agnes Kelly.

Deceased members reported:

Robert H. Ames  
 Rudolph Hicks  
 Wayne Stanton  
 Libbie Price Turner.

July 8-9, 1955. It was voted to consolidate the Old Red Brick and the Omro High Alumni but that each retain their own officers, Hold own meetings during the day, have customary picnic and then meet and have dinner with the alumni in the evening.

There were 69 registered--20 more than in 1954.

Colman Gadbaw reviewed his college thesis of School Buildings of Area and the Development of Schools in Omro. Material was taken from original records of 100 years ago when this district was organized and is part of a thesis. The deceased member was Franklin C. Hollister.

New officers were Pres F. Bennett; V. Pres Ray Hoeft; Sec Ida May Bower; Treas Agnes Kelly.

Page 13A is a copy of the article of Coleman Gadbaw's talk. Dr. Wm L. Herner of Milwaukee presented the original crimson and cream ribbon mounted and framed, that were chosen in 1900 as the Omro High School colors. This was accepted in behalf of the faculty by R. Hoeft, Ag instructor, and will be placed beside the painting of the Old Red Brick presented last year. Next year officers: Harvey Treleven, H President; V. Pres. Ben Phillips; Sec Mrs. Ida May Bower; Treas Miss Grace Carter.

Deceased were:

Dr. Frank Silverthorn  
 Libbie Price Turner  
 Wm Estabrook  
 Lydia Wastfall  
 Lealie Chapman

*Lealie*

From the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern issue telling of the Old Red Brick meeting of July 8, 1955.

Coleman Gadbaw, an Omro graduate and former teacher, gave an interesting talk with the school buildings of Omro as his subject. This was based on one part of his master's thesis for which material was gathered from the town clerk's old records as well as those of school districts and newspaper reports.

Education in Winnebago County was started by the federal government in 1834 at which time 34 cabins were built near Neenah for the purpose of educating the Indians. The project was abandoned two years later after the Indians refused to live in the cabins but used them to house their horses.

Dame schools were operated in the Howe district (now a part of the Omro district) and the Lowd (now the Maple district.) About this time towns were organized and the Tice, Maple and Howe were the first districts in this area to have formal schools.

In 1850 Omro (then called Bloomingdale) became District No. 5 and the land upon which the tennis court is located was given by a Mr. McAllister, always to be used for school purposes. On this land the first school was built and the teacher received \$28 for the first year's work. In 1852 Hiram Webster, town superintendent of schools, (the county superintendent's office was created in 1861) annexed the land north of the Fox River, which was called Indian land at that time.

By 1856 the building became too small and \$2,000 was raised to erect a new school, which became known as the "Old Red Brick". The first school building was moved two blocks east and is now the Bower residence. In 1866 lots were purchased two blocks east and two blocks north of the bridge and a school, which later became known as the North Side School, was built. The East Side, not to be outdone, succeeded in obtaining a similar school in 1882.

In 1893 the original unit of the present buildings was built and the Old Red Brick was torn down. Many of the bricks became doorstops upon which pictures of the school were painted by Mrs. Bushnell. Finally the North and East Side schools were discontinued and disposition made of the property. Additions to the original building succeeded as follows: 1905, the Webster building; 1909, the north part of the main building; 1929, the band building; 1934, the Annex; about 1950, the shop, and finally in 1955 the new elementary building.

Hiram Webster was the first person in Wisconsin to realize the value of and to do something about school training in industrial arts. In 1876 he went East to remarry and attend the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. There he saw exhibited models to be used to teach the manipulation of machinery. These came from none other than the Moscow Institute in Russia. In 1883 Webster's will was written and provided that any money left from his estate should be used to build such a school in Omro. Stout's idea of Stout Institute did not precede that date. Webster left an estate valued at \$174,000 with a residue of \$52,000, the use of which was finally allowed by the courts for the building of the present Webster building. It is administered by a corporation of three and two members of the school board.

June 1, 1956. 50 members registered. James I. Clark of the State Historical Society spoke on early (and also somewhat later) Wisconsin history. He mentioned: 1856 building of the Red Brick; 1906 the Webster building, at a cost of \$35,000 for building and equipment; 1909 Omro and Menominee only ones in state with "domestic science and manual training"; 1956 H.B. Patch school. Recent changes such as fewer boats, bridge tender not on continuous duty, blacksmith shops of less importance, horse drawn street sprinkler not used, building of swimming pool, bus line no longer needed, Annex built, and use of daily papers and radio for communication.

Deceased since last meeting:

Ella Drew Stanley  
Sadie Carver Wells  
Ethel Bloomer Bean  
Maude Sullivan Zimbrick  
Ina Morton Cronk  
Nettie Polar Stead

Charles Jones  
Ben C. Pryor  
Andrew J. Goggins  
Nathaniel Lincoln  
Crystal Bartlett Marty

Roll call of graduates showed thinning of the ranks.

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1877 - Wm Treleven                         | 1909 - Bessie Fisher         |
| 1881 - A.B. Treleven                       | 1911 - Ruby Grossman Sheldon |
| 1886 - Cora Belloway                       | Ida May Davis Bower          |
| 1895 - Mary Morton Howell                  | 1912 - Emma Stanley          |
| 1896 - Wm Merrill                          | 1919 - Harvey Treleven       |
| 1899 - E Grant Smith and<br>Carroll Carter | 1921 - Grace Hobbins Stearns |
| 1900 - Luella Darrow                       | 1942 - James Clark           |
| 1902 - Mabel VanGilder Smith               |                              |
| 1904 - Kate Barden<br>Dr. Wm Berner        |                              |
| 1906 - Harold Mills<br>Eva Bussey Hankey   |                              |

New officers--Pres. Ida May Dower  
V. Pres. - Eva Hankey  
Sec - Luella Darrow  
Treas - Bessie Fisher

Of the 50 members present at the meeting only 5 actually attended the Old Red Brick. They were Miss Cassie E. Lewis, Miss Elizabeth King, Mrs. Mary Howell, Mrs. Nettie Bishop and Robert Fowler. All of these from out of town except Miss King.

June 7-8, 1957. 34 members and guests.

Roll call of real members of O.R.B.

|                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1877 - Wm Treleven                    | 1904 - Kate E. Barden                |
| 1881 - A.B. Treleven                  | 1906 - Harold Mills (O.H.S., rest sa |
| 1891 - Bonnie Hoover Rhoda            | Eva Bussey Hankey                    |
| Gladie Cope Brick                     | 1911 - Ida Davis Bower               |
| 1895 - Mary Morton Howell             | Ruby Grossman Sheldon                |
| Elizabeth Smith Knoll                 | 1917 - Floy Hinderman                |
| 1896 - Wm Merrill                     | 1927 - Ruth Westover                 |
| 1899 - E. Grant Smith (O.H.S.)        |                                      |
| 1900 - Luella Moran Darrow            |                                      |
| 1902 - Mabel VanGilder Smith (O.H.S.) |                                      |
| Rachel Kloehn                         |                                      |

New officers--Cassie Lewis, Pres.  
Lutie Darrow, F. Pres.  
Ruby Sheldon, Sec.  
Bonnie Flanagan, Treas.

Deceased since last meeting:

Rob't Fowler  
Bertha Cross  
Juel Smith  
Mattie Utley  
Judson Owells

Mr. Clemans of Oshkosh State Teachers College gave a talk on "Indian Trails of Winnebago County". It was the county most densely populated by the Indians in Wisconsin.

Winnebagoes owned all land south of the Fox River, the Menominees owning everything north of the Fox.

Indian trails about 12 feet wide and 3 feet deep and in some parts of the county some of the trails are still visible.

In the battle of Butte des Morts in 1728, the French practically wiped out the Fox Indians, which accounted for the name of Butte des Morts, or "Hill of the Dead".

June 27, 1958. Pres. Sherm Barnard called meeting to order.

Roll call of graduates:

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1885 - Bert Gummer            | 1911 - Ruby Grossman Sheldon      |
| 1895 - Mary Howell            | Zoie Drake Bradley                |
| Elizabeth Knoll               | Vera Thomas Knapwurst             |
| Winfred Sawyer                | 1912 - John Luscombe              |
| 1896 - Wm Merrill             | Helen Colby                       |
| 1899 - Valerie Barnard Runser | 1914 - Leah Appley Erickson       |
| Grace Puffer                  | Sherman Barnard                   |
| E. Grant Smith                | 1915 - Marie Bullis Barnard       |
| 1900 - Lutie Moran Darrow     | Marion Bradley Birch              |
| 1902 - Mabel VanGilder Smith  | 1916 - Edith Mackenzie            |
| 1904 - Kate Barden            | 1917 - Floy Hinderman             |
| Annabelle Bullis Bonnett      | Harbey Hyde                       |
| 1906 - Harold Mills           | Ethel Gay Bishop                  |
| Eva Bussey Hankey             | 1921 - Grace and Clayton Stearns. |
| 1909 - Bessie Fisher          |                                   |
| Mamie Root                    |                                   |

The question was brought up as to whether ORB Ass'n should continue. It was agreed to do so.

New officers: Roy M. Shelp, Pres; John B. Luscombe, V. Pres. Ruby Sheldon, S. Bonnie Mills Flanagan, Treas.

8 members had passed away, but the names were not recorded.

June 26, 1959. Roll call of graduates:

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1884 - Bert Gummer    | 1902 - Mabel Smith    |
| 1894 - Emily Sheerar  | 1903 - Olive Doyle    |
| 1895 - Mary Howell    | 1904 - Kate E. Barden |
| 1896 - Wm Merrill     | 1906 - Harold Mills   |
| 1898 - Chas Samphier  | 1911 - Ruby Sheldon   |
| 1899 - E. Grant Smith | 1912 - John Luscombe  |
| Valeria Runser        | 1914 - Sherm Barnard  |
| 1900 - Tutie Darrow   | Roy Shelp             |

Deceased members since last meeting--

Nellie Lasher  
 Kate King Stone  
 Grace Reed Sturdevant  
 Bessie Carter Niven  
 Jessie Clark Gee  
 August Moody  
 Berdena Hale Foster  
 Celia Osterman Flanagan  
 Albert Hough

Prof. Noyes gave a talk on Omro glass factory and showed slides of other glass factories.

June 24, 1960. President Bonnie Gummer presided. Disbanding was again brought up but it was agreed to have one more year.

Officers elected were: Pres. Roy Shelp; V. Pres., Elizabeth Knoll; Sec, Ruby Sheldon; Treas, Bonnie Flanagan.

June 30, 1961. Deceased since the last meeting:

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| G.E. Morton         | Maude Brownell       |
| Morton Cronk        | Edith Phillips Lewis |
| Alfred Lewis        | Lizzie Allen Hanson  |
| Emily Lewis Sheerar | Gene Rockwood        |

As there were so few Old Red Brickers remaining, and so many were unable to come, it was yet decided to meet one more year at the Park shelter house on the last Saturday in June.

Officers elected for the next year were: Pres. Elizabeth Knoll; V.Pres, Fred Bennett; Sec, Ruby Sheldon Buell; Treas, Bonnie Flanagan.

June 30, 1962. The minutes of the last O.R.B. Ass'n meeting was written on loose pages and placed in the back of the book as follows:

Meeting of O.R.B. was held in Scott Park on Sat. June 30, 1962. Address of welcome by Luella Darrow, response by Elizabeth Knoll.

Reading of minutes - Motion made and carried to accept the minutes as read.

A discussion on what to do with the money which has accumulated. The orig fund left to pay awards for essays written by students of O.H.S. student on some specific subject, and in view of the fact that original purpose is ended, the \$130.00 Savings and \$5.63 interest making a total of \$135.64.

It was discussed that the cemetery is so in need, that we give them the money that is left, whatever the amount--ana a motion was made by Mary Howell seconded by Leon Hoover that we use that money--Carried.

There was a bill for Secretary's salary of \$12.00.

Memorial service was by Luella Darrow. Deceased were Eva Brooks, Wm Cad H. Hinderman, Frank Taylor, Cora Belloway, Winnie Sawyer, Grant Smith, Will Morton, Cassie Lewis, and Gladie Brick.

A letter was read from Bessie Bridgman, and from Carroll Carter.  
 Meeting adjourned. Ruby Buell, Sec'y.

See school info from Marian Smith July 1992



Joint District No. 5,  
Winneconne and Omro.  
1906-1907.



Inez Shelp, Teacher.



SCHOOL OFFICERS

Edwin VanGilder, Director; George Smith, Clerk;  
Arthur Pingry, Treasurer.

### Pupils



|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ruby Grossman   | Gust Lange      |
| Carl Pingry     | Hattie Ginnow   |
| Clara Koenemann | Florence Ristau |
| Selma Halder    | Vina Lange      |
| Etta Halder     | Elsie Ginnow    |
| Daniel Ristau   | Lillie Ginnow   |
| Paul Ginnow     | Louis Lange     |
| Mary Halder     | Sophia Ristau   |
| Norman Quigley  | James Quigley   |
| Madaline Reber  | John Reber      |
| Lee VanGilder   | Dale Smith      |
| Louisa Reber    | Lillie Ristau   |
| Ada Halder      | Hazel Angell    |
| Hilda Reber     | Raymond Quigley |
| Jakie Smith     | Eddie Ristau    |
| Ray Pingry      | Mariam Smith    |
|                 | Georgie Halder  |







Pingry School - 1907-8

Back row - L to R

Clara Koeneemann (Zeglermann)

May Shelp, Teacher (Spencer)

Elaine Bennow

Lillie Bennow (Wynne)

Ruby Grossman (Sheldon Buell)

Selma Halder (Clark)

Vina Lange

Hattie Bennow Hoover

2nd row

Mary Halder

Marianne Smith

Norma Dingley (Lange)

Sophie Ristow (Hoffmann)

Ada Halder (Williams)

Hazel Angell (Reinke)

Lillie Ristow (Pingry)

front row

Jacob Duane Smith L to R

Ray Pingry

Raymond Dingley

Louis Lange

George Halder

Lee Van Hilder

Dale Smith

Eddie Ristow

Marianne





st of "The Partridge Case"



Original Cast of the "Partridge Case", a 1-act play written by Marian Smith for the 1948 State Centennial for Omro's observance, presented by the Omro Odd Fellow and Rebekah Lodges.

Characters are :- back row left to right:

Richard Crane - Court commissioner.

Viola Treleven - Lucia (Mrs. Alvin Partridge) - white mother.

Luella Darrow - Mary, Lucia's mother-in-law.

Emerence Kelling - Mrs. Boughton - Lucia's sister-in-law.

Kenneth Hellwig - John Law Williams - a witness.

Edna Brooks - Mrs. Ferguson - a witness.

Front row:

Marian Walter - Naka-Kom - Indian mother - niece of Big Peter.

Lyle Treleven - Big Peter - Indian witness.

## HEFFRON SCHOOL

Zenas Sumner (living on what is now Hwy 116 between Omro and Winneconne) was married New Years eve 1854 to Juliette Jordan, a school teacher, who taught the first school that was ever taught in the Poygan Township.

It was a little log school house in the Scofield district now called the Heffron district, where Miss Vera Wentzel has been teaching the past few years.

After teaching two terms Miss Jordan wished to resign, but Charles Wilkinson, the clerk of the school board, told her if she would teach another term he would make her a clothes basket when she got married. She reconsidered, taught the third term, and got the clothes basket after her first baby was born and carried the baby home in it.

----An excerpt from a history of the Sumner family printed in a Winneconne Local. It was written by 81-year-old Clara Sumner Kahn of Winneconne, the daughter of Zenas Sumner.

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# Blue Bell School reunion

## Each day opened with pledge of allegiance, song

O. N.  
10/6/94

By Kristen L. Morris

Behind the distant eyes of Ruth Spiegelberg lie the memories of the Blue Bell School of Omro.

While planing the reunion along with the committee, Ruth relived the days of the old school with vivid and fond memories.

"We opened each day with the Pledge of Allegiance and sang 'My Country Tis of Thee.'" Ruth attended the school in the late 1930's and early 40's. "There were about 17 kids attending at that time and they went from first to 8th grade. We used to carry our own lunches," recalls Ruth, "and in the winter we'd bring mason jars filled with creamed potatoes or the like and heat them up on the old round stove in the classroom. Kind of an early 'hot lunch' program."

Judy Brooks adds, "Remember the goiter pills we had to take? The nurse came and charged seven cents per student. The pills even tasted good."

The reunion took place Sunday, October 2, 1994 at Waukau. Some of the later students, who attended the school in the early

1960's just before the school closed, may be planning another reunion.

Among some of the information uncovered by the committee is a compilation of the school alumni used for the invitation list, a breakdown of expenses including the electric bill for the month of December, 1946 which required \$8.00 for the month for the use of lights. Also found were teachers' salaries. In 1947, the teacher earned \$153.20.

"I remember the really nice Christmas and Thanksgiving programs," Ruth smiles, "We put up a wire across the front of the room and put up a black or blue curtain. The school board came in and built a stage and all the parents and relatives would come to see the show. A neighbor would play the piano and everyone had a part!"

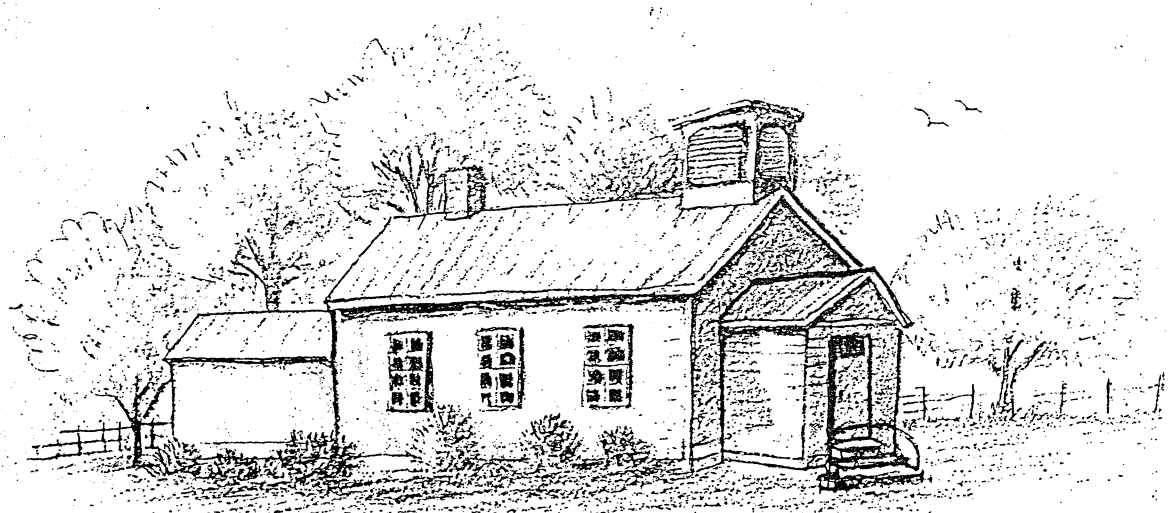
Ruth adds that summer was fun too, "The school picnics were great, everyone brought a lemon and we had a big milk can to make lemonade in with a big ladle. Everyone brought a dish to pass. Those were fun days."

"I don't think we really had 'want' for anything," declares

Judy, "We were poor being born in the depression, but we didn't know it. We were all in the same boat, no one had anything that someone else didn't. All our families farmed. Except...there was one family...their three kids always had frosting on their cakes that they brought to school, and I always wondered why we didn't. They had a little more money I guess."

The Blue Bell School first opened in 1918 with the first teacher being Bessy Fisher. In 1961, the school was made a part of the Omro Public School system and in 1962, the school closed its doors. Leone Cismosky was the teacher at the time. Blue Bell School was going to be used by the Historical Society in Omro and moved to a different location, but a fire broke out and damaged it around 1965. Then the school was destroyed. All that's left of the school is the old school fence, rusty and overgrown with blueberry vines, which surrounds a cornfield on the corner of E and 116.

"That's not all that's left," says Ruth, "we have our schoolmates and our memories."



BLUE BELL SCHOOL as it stood in the 1930's with an average attendance of 12 to 20

9.7d. 9/23/94

# Blue Bell school reunion

On October 2nd, former pupils, teachers and families of the Blue Bell School will hold a reunion. The 12:00 potluck picnic will be held at the Waukau Youth Center in Waukau.

Blue Bell School Joint District #4 was located at the intersection of the present 116 and County E about two miles southwest of Omro. The school closed in 1962.

The name "Blue Bell" dates back to a school meeting in the district in 1919. A state law was passed that year requiring the naming of all rural schools. It happened there were two schools in the vicinity known as "Bell School." This caused much confusion and a change was necessary. The school district having used the name for the longest time was permitted to use the name "Bell". The lot of renaming was left to district numbers.

At the school meeting many names were suggested. During the discussion Mr. Hugh G. Roberts said "Lets call our school Blue Bell". The suggestion was unanimously approved. The name "Blue Bell" has stood the test of time, a name to be cherished in the memory of its former pupils and their families.

The reunion committee working since early spring are: Kathryn Egan Binder, Judith Hankey Brooks, Dorothy Roberts Lind, Raymond Rimmel Jr., Ruth Knutzen Spiegelberg and Ruth Challoner Stone.