

SCHOOL HISTORY

How We Grew

"Eaton, whose chief claim to fame outside its own county lies in its being the pioneer gas town of Indiana, had its origin as a center of population in a milling enterprise that was located on the river in what is now the south edge of town." So wrote Dr. G. W. H. Kemper in his History of Delaware County published in 1908.

Eaton was incorporated September 10, 1873, being the first town in the county outside of Muncie to try this kind of government. According to a census taken the previous May, 158 persons lived in the community. Two one room frame school buildings served Eaton and surrounding community at that time.

In 1885, a two story, two room, brick building was erected on a plot of ground across the street from the mill and where the John Morris dwelling now stands.

As the gas boom came on the town grew and additions were added to the north and east sides. Later the primary department was moved into a frame building on the northwest corner of the lot.

In 1908 the entire structure was razed and a new building built on a five acre plot at the present location. Adjoining ground has since been acquired. The new building was not ready for occupancy in September. Temporary quarters were secured for the high school in the town hall. Late in the fall, proud and happy we entered the new building. Many a salesman, panting after his upgrade walk from the interurban station, complained about having to walk to the country, but before leaving remarked about the beauty of the building and campus.

In 1925 an addition was built on the north and numerous changes made in the original building. Within recent months, the agriculture department with the co-operation of the farmers have erected a cement block building about sixty feet east and north of the brick building. The Lions Club assisted by other organizations in the community have completed and have made usable a basement for a community building which it is hoped may be completed in the near future.

From the time of the erection of the building in 1885, there has been some teaching of secondary subjects. In 1898 Bon O. Adams and W. Q. Aspy arranged for two full years of high school work. In 1899 Sam D. Morris became the head of the school and organized a three years course, with an enrollment of 31. Nine of this number graduated in April 1900. It is the fiftieth anniversary of this event we are endeavoring to commemorate in this Yearbook.

In 1905 a commission was secured and a four year course has been offered ever since. For several years we had a nine months term. In 1934 it was reduced to eight months and four years ago was increased to eight and one-half months.

In the fall of 1899 there were 290 in the grades. In the fall of 1949 there were 351 enrolled in the first six grades, 104 in the seventh and eighth, and 155 in grades 9-12. The school now accomodates Eaton, all of Union Township and the west part of Niles Township. Niles Township schools were abandoned in 1917. Eaton became a township school in 1920 and all the children have been in one building since 1925.

Our curriculum has changed from time to time to meet the needs and desires of students and recommendations of educational people. In the early days the course usually prescribed consisted of four years each in English and Latin, three years each in history and mathematics, two years in science, music and art for all. Today the students have a wide range of electives. He may have four years in English and mathematics, three years in history and social science or may elect from commercial subjects, home economics, agriculture, industrial arts, Spanish, music or art. In 1908 the faculty for the high school consisted of four members. Today we have twelve besides the principal. Four of these, however, spend part of their time in the grades.

When electives first began to be offered, they were often carried as a fifth subject. Among them were German, commercial arithmetic, physical geography, debating, and Bible.

Home Economics or domestic science, as it was then called, was offered in 1911 without credit. Organized physical training was introduced soon after moving to the present location. The program was mostly calisthenics. The girls used Indian clubs and dumb bells. The boys played basketball after school. In 1912, the girls also had a team.

For a time inter-school basketball was abandoned because the old gym was pronounced a fire hazard.

The industrial arts department did well in about 1914 and again during the principalship of B. P. Beeson. It was then that the old gym was reconditioned, a new floor laid, wider stairway built and a stage constructed on the south side of the room. This work was done by the industrial arts department in addition to making victrolas, library tables, cedar chests and so forth. Previously, plays had been given in the town hall and commencement programs and operettas in the churches.

Basketball again became a leading activity. In 1926-27 a contest was held to select a name for the team. "Norsemen" was selected. The name was considered quite appropriate since we came from the northern part of the county and, at least in our opinion, were rather dangerous.

In 1910 we had a glee club. In 1914 the first attempt at a parent-teachers organization was made. In 1916 the orchestra was organized. The colors of purple and gold were adopted in 1908. One attempt was made to change them and failed. The first junior-senior trip was made in 1926. The first senior class to go without the juniors was the class of 1939. The cafeteria was installed in 1926-27. Bookkeeping was taught as early as 1923 but shorthand and typing did not enter until after the building was remodeled in 1925.

Our students have participated in various contests. They have brought home honors from county, district, and state. They have placed favorably in international ones.

One thousand one hundred fourteen, not including the present senior class, have received diplomas from Eaton High School. Most of these have been a credit to their alma mater. Some have made honor graduates in Indiana, Purdue, and Ball State. We have lawyers, engineers, manufacturers, a hospital superintendent, nurses, a statistician, accountants, ministers, bankers, an editor, reporters, photographers, school superintendants, principals, scores of teachers, farmers, office workers, mechanics, electricians and so on among our alumni.

During both world wars we have been well represented. In the last war more than 165 boys from our alumni were in the armed forces before hostilities ceased and seven of our girls were in auxiliary organizations. Seven of these boys gave their all.

How far has our influence extended? Who can tell?

Our administrators-----Sam D. Morris, 1899-1909; James S. Rickards, 1909-11; and 1912-13; W. H. Brinson, 1911-12; W. F. Reagan, 1913-14; J. B. Leas, 1914-19; B. P. Beeson, 1919-25; E. L. Mitchell, 1924-25; C. D. Fouts, 1925-27; Rolland Van Skyock, 1927-38; Ernie Castor, 1938-39; Hobart Black, 1939-43; Robert M. Gibson, 1943-

Trustees--Taylor G. Gibson, James Osenbaugh, Ed Smith, Dr. C. C. Shuler, and W. Raymond Gibson

County Superintendants--E. J. Black, Lee Baird, and Merritt Reed