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Signature Walter James Meredith
Date July 23, 1970

A HISTORY OF WOLF POINT'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

WALTER JAMES MEREDITH

A professional paper submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

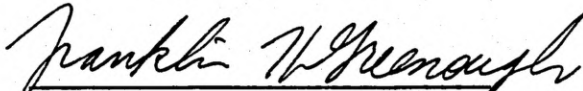
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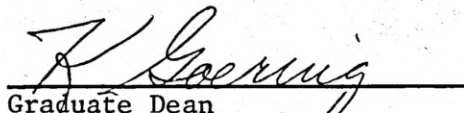
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to record the history of the growth and development of the Wolf Point Public Schools. A complete history of this system has never been written. It lies buried in the recollections of some of the early teachers and lay people, it is recorded in the many files of the age old newspapers and a portion may be found in the records of the clerk of School District 45. The investigator feels that the compiling of all of these sources into a single volume of school history will enable the patrons of School District 45, and the professional staff to gain a better understanding of their school. It is the intention of the writer to provide a copy of this study to the High School Library for use by present high school students, in order that they might gain some insight into the problems of the past.

The study was based upon research into the files of the Wolf Point Herald-News, recollections from past teachers and early townspeople, examination of the records of the Roosevelt County superintendent and by a study of the historical data in the files of the clerk of School District 45.

Wolf Point's school history is not long when measured in terms of some of the other districts in the state. It had its beginning in the 1880's when the Presbyterian Church first established a day school for the Indians of the Fort Peck Reservation. In its early years it was not a public school in the true sense of the word. With the coming of the Great Northern Railroad and the opening of the reservation to the homesteader, population increased and the need for a public school was felt. This need was expressed to the Glasgow School Board who finally granted permission for a public school to be opened in Wolf Point in 1911.

There has been since that time a steady growth of population in the town hence a relatively steady growth in the population of the school. In 1911-1912, 17 pupils were enrolled in school. This has grown to about 1260 pupils in the past school year 1970. This growth and the desire to provide the best education possible has resulted at times in controversy, high levies and sub-standard classrooms. In addition, emergency situations such as the fire in 1967, have created demands upon the professional staff, students and patrons. Throughout the 59 year history of the public schools of Wolf Point, however, the controversies have been settled, the levies passed and the sub-standard conditions alleviated. This has been made possible only by the able school trustees, dedicated professional staffs and the loyal patrons of School District 45.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper was to investigate and record the history of the Wolf Point Public Schools. The concern of the writer was to present as comprehensively as possible a recorded history that would aid the present school staff, students, trustees and people of the district in developing a better understanding of their school.

The opening of the reservation and the coming of the railroad brought in many people desirous of homesteading the Wolf Point area. The mission school could not meet the demands for schooling and a public school was established. This first school built by private funds established a tradition of cooperative effort on the part of trustees, staff and community that carries on today.

This study has investigated the growth of public education in Wolf Point from 1911 to 1970. In order to aid in the understanding of this growth, the writer has included a brief background of Montana's educational history as well as some historical notes on the founding of Wolf Point.

Statement of the Problem

The history of the Wolf Point Public Schools was, as many schools are, a loosely connected collection of events. It had never been recorded in one all inclusive volume or paper. The problem of this study

was to research all of the possible sources of the past and present history of the Wolf Point Public Schools and to record that history.

Procedure

The writer first established that no similar study had been conducted concerning the history of the Wolf Point schools. Literature pertaining to Montana's educational history and the founding of the city of Wolf Point were reviewed.

A thorough search of the files of the Wolf Point Herald-News constitutes the bulk of this study. In addition, records of the Roosevelt County Superintendent of Schools were examined, recollections were sought from past teachers and pioneer residents of the district, and the historical records of the clerk of School District 45 were reviewed in order to trace the historical growth of the Wolf Point Public Schools.

Limitations

This study was limited to one Montana school district. That district was School District 45 of Wolf Point, Montana. The writer considered only the public schools of the district except in cases where other districts or parochial school actions affected the public school.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF EDUCATION IN MONTANA

The difficulty of establishing the identity of the first school in Montana lies in the definition of the term "school". Perhaps the first school was at Nevada City in Alder Gulch, where a Miss Kate Dunlap taught a "subscription school", in the summer of 1863. (34) There are other contenders for the honor of the first school but true public school education in Montana began with the formation of a school district in Virginia City, Montana on the fifth of March, 1866. This was the same day that the first session of the Territorial Legislature Assembly convened. (38)

Public education grew slowly as the settlement of the state spread. One of the first superintendents of public instruction, Mr. A. M. S. Carpenter, made the first report on the status of education in Montana in October of 1867. His letter to the Governor of Montana is not only the first report of its kind but it indicates a remarkable lack of definite information indicative of the status of education at that time. The letter reads as follows:

Virginia City, 20th October, 1867

To His Excellency, the Governor, Green Clay Smith:

In compliance with your request and the intent of the law creating the office, I beg leave respectfully to submit the following report of the condition of the common school of the territory, so far as I have been able to obtain the statistics.

I was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of the late superintendent, A. H. Barrett, Esq., by the late General Thomas Meagher, then acting governor, on the 4th of March, 1867. I found no reports from the county superintendents in the office at that time, nor have I since received any save a very commendably full one from Superintendent Wilkinson, of Edgerton county, in response to my request issued on the 28th of September last, to the county superintendents, for the statistics in their possession. Through the kindness of Mr. R. N. Farley, clerk of District No. 1, Madison county, I am able to give you some statistics concerning the schools in this city, which you will find embodied in a tabular form accompanying this report.

In Beaverhead county, I learn indirectly, no public schools have been open during the year. No schools have ever been organized in Chouteau county. In Edgerton county, there are three school districts organized in which schools have been taught some portion of the year. Eight school districts have been organized in Madison county; but aside from District No. 1, of this city, I am uninformed of the fact of any school having been taught in either, though I think it fair to assume that there have been in each.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. M. S. Carpenter (38)

Cornelius Hedges was appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1873. He was perhaps the most outstanding of the early superintendents. Trained as a lawyer, he became dedicated to the task of creating schools in Montana. (1) He was able to report that there were schools established in the nine counties of the territory then existing and that the average length of the school term was 80 days. (38)

By 1881, the average school year was lengthened to 110 days, a course of study was prescribed, the county superintendents sent in regular reports, the Legislative Assembly adopted a uniform textbook law, deaf and dumb children were being sent east at public expense and

Helena, Butte, Bozeman, Deer Lodge and Virginia City were beginning high school work. (38) The end of the territorial period in 1889, saw 344 school districts having 419 school houses and employing 507 teachers in the state. (1)

When Montana became a state on November 8, 1889, the enabling act of that year greatly accelerated the growth of public school education. This act provided that upon admission to the Union, sections 16 and 36 in every township, or their equivalents, should be donated to the state for the support of public schools. (38)

The increased funds for schools made possible by the enabling act were of great help but Montana has always faced the problems of a sparse population, low income, great distances, droughts, depressions and disasters in the establishment of public education.

The story down to the present has been one of gradual alleviation of these troubles, and throughout the whole time, Montana has been able at least, to keep abreast of the National level. The devotion of teachers, supervisors, parents, students, and everyone concerned has been no less than sacrificial during most of the period since the first child opened a book in the territory. (34)

CHAPTER III

THE WOLF POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Founding of Wolf Point

Wolf Point began as an Indian campground. The nomadic Assiniboiné Indians, ever in search of the buffalo, used the area as one of their main campsites. It was not called Wolf Point by the Indians but was known as Frog Creek (Patgasa Wakpa) due to the many frogs that were found along that creek. (3)

William Bent, a nephew of Kit Carson, who was a pony express rider out of Fort Union from 1866 to 1868, is reported to have given the explanation of the naming of Wolf Point. He said that the town got its name from the fact that one winter the hunters killed such a large number of wolves here that they froze before the skins could be removed. The frozen carcasses were piled up to await the coming of spring. The pile was so high that it became a landmark for miles around. The exact spot is believed to be about 2 miles southwest of the present town, near where Wolf Creek empties into the Missouri River. (35)

In July of 1879 the U. S. Government moved the main agency of the Fort Peck Reservation from Fort Peck to Poplar and Wolf Point. Wolf Point was designated as the sub-agency for the Assiniboinés and the Western half of the reservation. Since the main activities carried on at Wolf Point were by the Indian Service, the "townspeople" consisted of those who were placed here to provide that service to the Indians.

Such was also true of the early permanent buildings built in Wolf Point. (3)

Wolf Point remained for the next few years as an agency town, and its growth was marked largely by those things designed to provide increased services to the Indians. These increased services included a government doctor, agency blacksmith, storekeeper, trader, policeman, interpreter and the missionaries.

The coming of the Great Northern Railroad in 1887 opened up a new era for development. Each train brought a new load of people eager to farm this rich land. As the immigrants came there was a need for more and more land. A treaty between the Assiniboine-Sioux tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation and the United States was drawn up. Lands were surveyed and prepared for allotments of various tracts to tribal members. There were also proposed townsites plotted and the present Wolf Point was among these. The effective opening of the Fort Peck Reservation was on June 30, 1914 at which time townsite lots were sold to Indians and non-Indians by bids and public sales held by federal employees. (3)

When the reservation was opened it was decided that a "new town" of Wolf Point should be built by the Great Northern tracks. The railroad had passed a mile or so away from the "old town", hence the sub-agency buildings and one of the large mission dormitories were moved to the "new town" and the rest of "old town" was torn down. (3)

Wolf Point then began a period of rapid growth. Lumberyards, stores, a blacksmith, schools, doctors and all types of accouterments associated with a progressive community came into being. The volume of Montana History edited by Tom Stout in 1921 states:

The largest town in the county and one which seems to have a bright future before it, not only on account of the railroad shops but also because of the large territory opening up around it is in the Fort Peck Indian Reservation Reclamation Project, is Wolf Point, situated in the southwestern portion of the county. This is a railroad division point on the mainline of the Great Northern Railroad, and according to the 1920 census report had a population of 2,098. In 1916, this community was only an Indian agency town, with a population of 300 inhabitants. Today it has beautiful homes, fine churches, a good school system and progressive business establishments. (38)

Those words with minor revisions could be written of the Wolf Point of today. The railroad shops are gone, the population is close to 4,000 and there is still talk of reclamation projects but the "beautiful homes, fine churches, a good school system and progressive business establishments", still are much in evidence.

The Beginning

Education in Wolf Point began through the efforts of the Presbyterian missionary workers. Though this education was not of the public school type, it deserves mention as the springboard of what was to become the public school system.

For some time the Montana Presbyterians, in conjunction with the Board of Foreign Missions, supported missionary work among the Indians on the Fort Peck Reservation. Wolf Point was a focal center where a

day school was opened in the 1880's. (2) This education effort of the missionaries continued until the late 1920's. The pupils in the later years were all Indians and the curriculum was devoted largely to the teaching of Religion, Home Economics and Industrial Arts.

In 1884 the government took over a part of the Presbyterian missionaries' responsibilities. They began the first school for non-Indian children in Wolf Point. At that time the pupils were the children of the sub-agents and a few Indian children. Attendance was strictly voluntary. (3) The classes were held in a government owned log cabin.

The following excerpt gives some insight into that school:

Major Parker was in charge of the Indian Agency in 1885, when Sherman T. Cogswell wrote from his Michigan home, asking what opportunity there was for a young man in this country. Major Parker wired for him to come at once as there was an opening in a school at Wolf Point. What young Cogswell, 21, may have thought of the prospect when he arrived at Wolf Point, Oct. 15, 1885, to begin his duties as a teacher, the site of that log schoolhouse was to be the scene of his activities for 48 years. Aside from the children of the sub-agent, most of his pupils were Indians. The ages ranged from little tots up to young men and women. He was unable to talk Assiniboine, but managed to get along, as the Indians were expected to learn English. A noon lunch was served everyday, and the young teacher found his morning attendance much better than that of the afternoon. (35)

As the young settlement continued to struggle for existence so did the school within it. The government continued to operate the school until 1907. During the next two years there was apparently no organized school in Wolf Point. It was closed for reasons that this writer can only surmise. Perhaps no teacher was available or perhaps the agent had

no children and little need was felt for continuing the expense of running a school for the few Indians who attended. In 1910 the government re-opened the school. (3)

By the year 1911 the improved transportation generated by the railroad was having an impact upon the community. A. O. Vaala was hired to teach in the school where attendance was steadily increasing due to the growing population of the city. (3)

Wolf Point at that time was a part of the Glasgow School District and the Glasgow School Board would not supply funds for a larger and better building. After many repeated requests, the minutes of the Glasgow School Board, October 6, 1911 noted: "moved and seconded that a building be rented and a public school be opened in Wolf Point". (3)

The demand for a school house was fulfilled by John Listerud, W. B. Everett and W. H. Smith in 1912, when they constructed a building at their own expense. In 1913 this school became a part of the district of Scobey, and that year an additional room was added for the steadily increasing scholastic census. The original builders of the building were then reimbursed for their advanced money. (98)

The opening of the reservation created a tremendous increase in population. Mr. Frank Kenny was employed as the teacher and he began school in September with 14 pupils the first day. Within two months 65 pupils were enrolled. During the summer of 1914 a two story frame building was constructed to house the growing school population. By

1915, 118 pupils were enrolled, 12 of whom were doing high school work. (3)

The continued demand on the limited school facilities pushed the school board into the building of a larger structure. On June 30, 1916 a contract for \$16,071.00 was let to construct a two story brick building with a full basement. (3)

The new structure opened, but with the Great Northern Railroad moving their division point to Wolf Point, it proved again to be too small. There were 200 pupils and seven teachers on opening day. The school board decided that another room was badly needed to accomodate the fast growing enrollment and one of the basement rooms was fixed up for that purpose. (39)

The continuing efforts of the community to establish education were not without reward. The following article appeared in the December 28, 1916 issue of the Wolf Point Herald.

The State Board of Education notified Principal Frank Kenny of the local school, that the Wolf Point School was put on the accredited list and given credit for two years work. This means that any grade issued to a pupil here will be recognized by any school in the state, either high school, university or normal school. With this advancement Wolf Point will receive its share of the high school funds from the state. If the present progress is kept up it is expected that in the next two years the local schools will receive credit for four years, which will entitle and admit any of the graduates to the university without examination. (40)

In November of 1917 the Great Northern Railroad moved 400 employees to Wolf Point. Many of these employees had families and the school

enrollment doubled. (3) The school board, hard pressed to meet the needs of the school which had grown faster than the finances of the district, was convinced that to build permanently was the best economy. (41)

Bids were called for in April of 1918 on the addition to the school building. (42) The contract was let to Thorwaldson and Johnson of Parshall, North Dakota for \$42,370.00. The plumbing and heating contract went to John Coffee for \$14,692.00. W. H. Lewis, the architect, stated that "the completed building will be the largest and most thoroughly modern in the northwest with dimensions of 96 x 123 ft. ... three floors, including the basement which will have a gymnasium, 23 classrooms, a large assembly room, principal's office, library and a home economics room". (3)

Construction began on the new addition but when school opened in September with an enrollment of 437 pupils the board faced new difficulties. The new addition was not complete and many of the old rooms were unusable due to the construction in progress. The board requested and pressed into service on an emergency basis, the Union Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church to house pupils until the school was completed. (46)

During this same period of time the first school was constructed on the northside of Wolf Point. The board originally planned to move the old frame school building from the southside to the northside. (41) As this proved to be unfeasible the board decided to erect a new building.

on the northside. The building was to be built in two stages with the basement made of cement blocks to be constructed and put into use that fall. The Wolf Point Herald stated, "it will provide two large and comfortable rooms in which there will be ample light and ventilation and will be much better in every way than the old building". (45) This basement building served the northside for 20 years with little improvement over those years. It was finally condemned by the State Fire Marshall and the Health Office when dampness caused the floors to buckle. (3)

The problems of unfinished schools were somewhat alleviated by an enforced vacation of six weeks due to an epidemic of influenza in the fall of 1918. (47) The Wolf Point Herald reported in January of 1919 that the new Northside School was opened and the two rooms in it were already full. It was further reported that the contractor had "kindly" let them use three rooms in the new building. (48) By the end of January the new school was complete and all students were moved into it from their emergency rooms in the churches. (49)

Despite the problems that faced the school board over the new construction, there was still much concern about the quality of the educational program being offered by the schools. This concern is evidenced by the following article taken from the Wolf Point Herald of June 13, 1918.

All teachers are urged to plan to attend some summer school. In hiring teachers for another year trustees are requested to give preference to teachers who have had a course in summer school. Salaries will be based on somewhat the same basis. Beginning in 1920, by order of the state board of education, no certificates will be granted in the State of Montana to any teacher who has not had at least 12 weeks of professional training. (43)

Once again the quality of the educational program being offered by the Wolf Point School was recognized when the State Board of Education granted the high school full credit for three years of high school work done. (44) In 1919, the final goal was realized when word was received from the state that Wolf Point was now a four year accredited high school. It was advised that, "students will do well to see what we offer before going to other schools". (92)

The Middle Years

In the period following the rapid building era just past, the Wolf Point schools were mainly concerned with improving the quality of their educational system. Progress now was being measured in terms of increasing enrollments, expanding curricular and extra curricular activities.

Frank H. Livingston became the superintendent of the Wolf Point schools in 1918. During his tenure of 21 years much progress was achieved. He was responsible for all grades from the first grade to the twelfth grade and in addition he had the responsibility of 13 rural schools which were also in School District 45.

Mr. Livingston was a dedicated educator and was responsible for establishing a quality program of education in the Wolf Point schools. He was influential not only on the local level but the result of some of his work was felt at the state level.

Superintendent Livingston instituted a tax-penalty investigation in Roosevelt County. Every county in the state followed his lead and as a result, a new law was placed on the statute books. The law resulted in the county returning \$7,500 to District 45, \$30,000 to the schools of Roosevelt County and \$1,000,000 to the schools of Montana. (85)

He began an investigation of Teacher Placement Bureaus which resulted in the Montana Education Association beginning such a service to save teachers' money. Mr. Livingston was one of the leaders in pressing the legislature to pass a bill to enforce payment of high school tuition for students attending school outside of the county in which they lived. (85)

His efforts in securing tuition money from the government for Indian students brought at the peak \$10,000 per year to School District 45. In addition, he played a large part in securing from the Indian Department the money to build the Southside School. (85)

Mr. Livingston was a president of the Montana Education Association, served as chairman of the State Textbook Commission, was an instructor in summer sessions for teachers and had worked in the summer in the

office of the State Department of Public Instruction. His Montana history outline and grade language outline were adopted by the Department of Public Instruction for state-wide use. (85)

During his tenure Mr. Livingston wrote a news column for the Wolf Point paper. These columns, which appeared in nearly every weekly paper during his 21 years, contained much information about the Wolf Point schools. They were used to inform the public, to promote the schools and to advance his personal views concerning education. The writer of this paper was intrigued by these columns not only from the volume of words used in the 21 year period but by the variety of items presented in them. The writer has selected one of these columns in its entirety for inclusion in this paper. Mr. Livingston's column of January 19, 1934 read as follows:

These pupils enrolled in school on Jan. 8: Doris Kemp 7th, Peggy Kemp sophomore, Bernard Kemp, junior, (all transfers from Scobey); Isabel Madison, freshman, transfer from Circle; Eugene Solberg 8th, transfer from Washington; Ester Kelstrup, freshman; Catherine Grove, freshman, transfer from Minnesota; Iola Mireau, 1st grade, transfer from Oswego. Total in high school is 279 - total in all schools is 889. Esther Kelstrup was the 100th freshman to enroll this year - still I have an inquiry from south of Oswego as to why we need a larger school building. Ten minutes spent in visiting our school while it is in session will give the correct answer.

The Montana Pioneers may be getting feeble because of age but another set of pioneers is coming up. Here are my reasons for thinking so. On Thursday morning Bessie Hagen of the Waska community (32 miles north) walked into my office for an excuse for absence. I asked her how she came in. Her answer was, "On Horseback". Thirty-two miles thru snow drifts to get back to high school. America will never go haywire when we have youngsters like Bessie growing up. She is determined to have an education at any cost and we expect to see her in the front rank.

of successes.

Cyrus Lee rode in on horseback 17 miles to take the state examinations last Saturday. Bessie and George McCown come trudging in these cold mornings from five miles away. Sometimes a passing motorist picks them up but more often they keep going on foot to cover the distance each way. The Erickson children drive in ten miles each morning. Part of this distance is over tough roads. Many walk from one to five miles. So I repeat - the pioneer flame has not been extinguished.

Director Louis L. Howard of the Bozeman State College regimental band writes that the band will be touring the state and will play a concert here on Sunday, March 25. He wishes to arrange to play several numbers with our high school band and wants the band to play several numbers for them. This will be a rare treat for music lovers. Remember the date March 25th.

Director Knapp of Havre writes that elaborate plans are being pushed for the great Havre musical to be held there before the end of the school year.

Harry Veldhuis plays trombone in the Bob Cat band. He is taking industrial chemistry at the State College.

The big tournament will be held in the beautiful gym at Great Falls March 8-9-10. We hope the Wolves get a chance to play in this tournament. A win there means a trip to Bozeman to play for state championship.

These seventh and eighth grade pupils took the state examinations in Wolf Point Saturday: Jennie Magnuson, Selma Magnuson, of Divide School; James Holum of South School; Christel Mahlum and Elizabeth Shirk of city schools, Aileen Schneider of Macon School; Lucille First Eagle, Wayne Gorton, Joseph Day, Leland Reddog, Mildred Garfield, Harvey Hamilton, of Day School; James Boyd of Chelsea; Virgil Bilyeu of Longview; Phyllis Breum, Omar Gardner, Elsie Hock, Kenneth Huso of Star School; Cyrus Lee of Wide Awake; Seline Huso of Star; Thelma Holien of Dry Fork; Lillian Kyllingmark of Dry Fork; Alice Stensland of Divide School; Evelyn Bilyeu of city schools. Several of District 45 pupils wrote at Volt on Friday. Daniel Toavs of Wide Awake also wrote in town.

Miss Bessie Anderson bought these books for the Pioneer Library: Blue Teapot, Trail of Good Cat Jupe, Rabbit Lantern, Polaris, Big Canoe, Magic Loaves, Little Black Eyes, Nicolani, Paddle Wings and Rusty Pete. This makes an excellent addition to their library. The money came from the entertainment fund.

Leslie Southerland of Ronan enrolled as a sophomore in our high school.

Reports of these students come from the Northern Montana College: Odin Fenne, Paul Donehoo, Tom Kelly, Garnet Montgomery, Don Nelson, Daniel Deck. Most of the reports were good. A couple need more midnight oil if they are to uphold Wolf Point college traditions. Word from the State College says that Marvin Meyer is an honor roll student there. That-ta-boy Marvin. Reports on the others are not in yet. Neither are the reports from Missoula or Billings.

Evelyn Coffey, a Wolf Point graduate has a fine position at Helena. Congratulations.

Read the article in the last McCall's if you want the low-down on the "Little Red Schoolhouse". Mr. Average Citizen, what are you doing to prevent further raids being made on the public school. If you think it isn't striking home read "Let's Talk It Over" in a recent Scobey paper or go up and sit in on a school conference at Glasgow.

In case you may not see the Scobey article, here are some quotations to think about: "In one state, Kansas, 700 schools have closed. Another south central state closed 400 schools, another 250, etc. In Montana 66 schools have closed. And the federal government goes right on building roads and dams and sewers. 2,280,000 children have no schooling available; another half million are getting only four or five months schooling in a year, another million and a half get only six months schooling, and another five and a quarter million have less than eight months schooling in the year".

I get letters and letters. Some I read to the Lions Club. Some are printed so others may enjoy them with us.

104 Eleventh St.
Mena, Arkansas
Dec. 2, 1933

Supt. F. H. Livingston
Wolf Point, Mont.

Dear Mr. Livingston:

We look back to our school life with you with much pleasure. We have entered schools in Texas and Arkansas and so far have found the Wolf Point school, under your capable supervision, superior.

All four of us were put up a grade this year. We credit you and your teachers for this advancement. Father and mother both would like the Wolf Point people to appreciate your wonderful and untiring work.

We all wish you and the family a joyous Christmas and a jolly New Year.

Gratefully yours,
The H. C. Saunders Family

I print this so that Wolf Point teachers and patrons of our school may share the praise given in this letter as they, more than I, are responsible for the type of education the Wolf Point schools are giving. When a letter like this comes in, we take a new lease on life. Thanks.

William Mindeman of our school board has been very ill for some time. Mr. Hoch brought him to town for medical aid. We hope for his rapid recovery. The trip in was made thru the snow banks and was a painful ride. Once again we see that good roads are a necessity. People from the country can tell some heart rending stories of hardships endured in their effort to get to town. Our federal highways are well on the way to completion. Now it is up to us to bend every effort to get all-weather arterials into the rural sections. Children who should have been back to school on Jan. 8 are straggling in as late as Jan. 16 because of road conditions. We hope all the snow goes into the ground. Six hours by team to make twenty miles! Reminds me of my days in the Medicine Lake country twenty years ago. (73)

It was through a perusal of columns like the above that the writer of this paper was able to piece together those early years of the Wolf Point schools.

The curriculum offered by the Wolf Point school was noted throughout the years by Mr. Livingston. Changes were made as times changed and new demands were made upon the school.

In 1921 the high school offered Spelling and Penmanship, Cooking, Sewing, History I, History II, Physical Education, Typewriting I and II, Shorthand I and II, Bookkeeping I and II, Commercial Geography, School Management, Educational Methods, Review Common Branches,

Industrial Work, Latin I and II, English I, II and III, General Science, Commercial Law, American Civics, Plane Geometry, Algebra, Higher Algebra, Physics, Biology and Business English. (95)

The curriculum of the grade school at the same time offered Agriculture, Reading, Civics, Arithmetic, Spelling, Grammar, History, Physiology, Geography and Music for the seventh and eighth graders. Students in grades one through six were required to take Arithmetic, Spelling, Reading, Language, Hygiene, Drawing, Music, Penmanship, Geography, and Phonics. (95)

Normal school training or teacher preparation was an important part of the high school curriculum. The program offered to the students in teacher preparation made provision for practice teaching in the rural schools of the district. Graduates of the normal school training were granted a teacher's certificate without examination at that time. (50) This course was offered until new certification laws required that no certificates would be granted to anyone without 24 credits of college work. (58)

The continuing attempts to provide what the students and the community needed resulted in several innovations in school curriculum. At the grade school level in the year 1924 a special class was arranged to meet from 4:00 till 4:40 for students who were behind in their work. (53) This idea was expanded in the later years to be a six weeks vacation school for students who had failed in one or two subjects.

Two teachers were hired to teach the lower four grades and one for the upper four grades. (72) The grade school also was offering an outside reading course in cooperation with the library which was unique in the state. (65) An intelligence testing program was used to group students according to ability. (56)

The high school added a short course for farm boys who could not get in for regular school. The course was three months in length beginning in January and ending April first or as soon thereafter as spring work opened up. The subjects were Farm Arithmetic, English, Spelling, Agriculture, Farm Bookkeeping and Typewriting. (54) A parent visitation night was instituted. Classes were dismissed for the afternoon and rescheduled for that night. Parents were invited to visit the classes to see what was taking place. (63)

Biology, Home Nursing, Botany, Commercial Geography, Solid Geometry, Sociology, Economics, Nature Study and full term course in Agriculture were added to the curriculum as the need arose. (37) (99)

The field of audio-visual education was introduced to the Wolf Point Public Schools in 1922. This was in the form of the victrola. Each room was allowed to keep it for two and a half days, then it was passed on to the next room. (100) Mr. Livingston's interest in audio-visual equipment and the subtle use of his newspaper column to achieve this was noted in 1922.

One hundred schools in the State of Montana have a motion picture machine. Wolf Point has been more conservative than the neighboring schools. Glasgow, Poplar, Culbertson, Sidney, Havre and others have had machines for the last year. The large film companies are adding educational departments. (101)

His efforts to secure a machine for the district were successful and weekly films were added to the school curriculum.

As the school enrollment grew and more courses were being offered a similar growth was taking place in the area of extra-curricular activities. Of all of the extra-curricular activities which have been instituted over the years, athletics was and perhaps remains the most dominant activity. The early pride in athletic accomplishments is still present in Wolf Point today and one finds that many people of the community refer to past years in terms of what the football or basketball teams did in that year.

In 1921, Wolf Point won its first District Championship in basketball. By virtue of this win they were qualified to participate in the State Tournament in Bozeman. (94) Since that first tournament nearly 50 years ago, Wolf Point has participated in 22 State Tournaments in basketball, winning the State Championship seven times. The Wolves were Class "B" Champions in 1941, 1944, 1952, 1953, 1961, 1962 and in 1968, they won the Class "A" Big 32 State Championship. (3)

The importance of the basketball team to the school and the community was reflected by the training rules published in the Wolf Point Herald in 1926.

BASKETBALL RULES

The boys' basketball season opens officially today, Monday, Nov. 8, 1926.

Any boy who is known to smoke after today, Nov. 8, 1926, will be dropped from the first squad for the basketball season. He will only be allowed to play on 2nd or 3rd squad.

Any boy over 18 who frequents pool halls during the school days or evenings of school days will be barred from the squad one week for each time that he is known to break this rule. This does not mean Friday or Saturday nights but does mean Sunday nights.

Any boy who is known to be out of his home at a later hour than 9:30 o'clock on any school nights except Friday or Saturday will be barred from practice one week for each time that he is known to break this rule. This rule does not include school affairs or community affairs as Armistice Day.

Any boy who is in the red in any subject is barred from evening practice for two weeks. This will give him an opportunity to make up the work. Until made up he cannot play evenings or in games. No work can be made up in less than two weeks.

Any boy who is below 80 in any subject but over 75 will not be allowed to take out-of-town trips if he has to miss any classes. He may play in home games.

Boys who swear in the dressing rooms will be barred from practice two weeks for each known offense.

These rules are strict. Only with the enforcement of such rules, we can hope to have a district team. If every boy does his part, we can have a championship team this year and 1928. (61)

Football was first played in Wolf Point in 1914. (3) A team was organized by some of the local high school boys and games were arranged as they could be found. In 1919 the first regularly organized season of football was begun by the high school. (93) The success of the high school in football led to Class "B" Divisional Championships in 1929, 1937, 1939, 1943, 1947, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, and 1962. (3) There were also some losses and one of the worst occurred in 1921 when the local team was defeated by Williston,

North Dakota High School by the score of 101 to 0. (97)

Ranking almost on par with the athletic program was the band. Organized in 1921, it made its first public appearance that spring in a concert at the Liberty Theater and was very well received. (96) By 1926, Wolf Point students were participating in the State Music Meet and in 1927 Harold Schipman won the gold medal at the State Meet for his coronet solo. (62)

In 1934, the band was invited to a national band contest in Des Moines, Iowa. The people of the community raised \$1,200 to send the 50 member band by train to participate in the contest. When the band returned home with their director Charles Simon and a trophy for first place in the Class "C" competition, the town turned out enmasse to greet them. (3)

In addition to the band and athletics, the high school offered chorus; orchestra; a mandolin, guitar, and banjo club; debate and speech teams; class plays; and lyceum programs. (97)

Extra-curricular activities for the elementary schools were somewhat limited. A full variety of athletic competition was available which included basketball, football, baseball and marble tournaments. In 1926 the first grade school operetta, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", was presented. (60) A grade school band was begun in 1928 and the 29 piece band presented their first public concert in the high school assembly. (66)

One of the persistent problems that faced the school administration during the early 20's was that of tuition. As the school offered more than some of the other schools in the area and as many rural school districts did not have high schools, more and more students from outside the district came to school in Wolf Point.

The school board decided to charge every pupil who resided outside of the county and was attending Wolf Point High School \$90.00 per year. This represented one pupil's share of the teachers' salary for the year. Grade school pupils who lived outside of District 45 would be charged at the rate of \$50.00 per year. This money was to be collected in advance from the parents and it would be up to them to get the money out of their home county. (55) The board enforced this by publishing a list of who and how much had been paid toward the tuition bill in the local paper. (59)

Tuition for the Indian students was collected from the government. This, however, took an act of Congress and the payments often ran several years behind. An example of this delayed payment was noted by the Herald. In 1926 it was reported that a claim of School District 45 for \$3,230.10 due for Indian tuition for the year 1921, was due for approval by the President "shortly". (57)

Tuition was only one small source of the funds needed to operate the schools. The major portion of the money came from the people who lived within the district. These levies were passed with little trouble

despite the fact that as many as 38.8 mills were asked for at times.

(64) The people of District 45 have always responded in the affirmative to the needs of the schools.

Two referendums were put before the people in the 20's and 30's which were rather unusual. The first of these involved the Superintendent, Mr. Livingston.

At the regular January meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District 45, a new contract was offered to Mr. Livingston. In the discussion that followed, it was decided that before he was to be rehired, the parents of enrolled pupils should vote to see if they still wanted him as their superintendent. The clerk was instructed to make out ballots and send them out to all of the patrons of the school. (51)

The Wolf Point Herald carried in the same issue that announced the referendum, a "Statement To Patrons Of The Wolf Point Schools", signed by 19 of the 27 teachers presently working in the school. In this rather long letter Superintendent Livingston was strongly defended for his discipline and an earnest plea made that he be rehired as superintendent. It also stated that at his own request, due to the financial depression in the district, his wages were cut from \$3,000 per year to \$2,700. (51)

The outcome of the referendum was announced in the Herald on February 14, 1924. It had resulted in a five to one endorsement of Mr. Livingston. There were 198 for re-engaging and 41 against

re-engaging. Mr. Livingston was given a new contract for \$2,700.

(52)

The second unusual referendum concerned student dances in the schoolhouse. Opposition arose from the public to the holding of supervised student dances in the high school gymnasium. A few dances had been held on Friday nights in which only students and alumni had been invited. Faculty members were present and the general public was not permitted to attend. (74)

Mr. Livingston called a meeting at his office and invited some of the ministers, board members and various other civic leaders. After a general discussion among the group both for and against dancing, it was decided to hold a referendum on the matter and let the voters decide what was to be. (74) The editor of the Herald expressed himself concerning the referendum by writing, "It is difficult to understand why dancing as a school recreation is any more of a proper subject for a community referendum than football, basketball, track, band or glee club. All of them can be overdone and harmful. None of them needs to be harmful". (75)

When the ballots were counted, 287 were for dancing while 90 were opposed to dancing in the city schools. (76)

In the early 1930's the pressing problem facing the administration was the growing enrollment. Over 300 junior and senior high students were enrolled in the fall of 1931. It was necessary to take over another grade school room to house these students. (67) The school

news column in the paper devoted space to the promotion of a new building. These were in the form of subtle hints concerning the inadequacy of the gym. In 1932, it was stated that, "a sound proof gym would be of more value and could be used during the day. As it is our gym class cannot start until 3:45 or 4:00". (68) Another such item appeared in a sports story which read, "With the galleries and bleachers of the 'chicken coop' gym full with some 600 fans ...". (71)

The combined effects of the depression and severe drought then present in Eastern Montana made it impossible to finance the building of a new school locally. It was decided by the Board of Trustees to apply for help through the Department of the Interior. Some funds were being released to assist in construction of schools located on Indian reservations.

On February 12, 1932, Congressman Scott Leavitt of Montana, introduced a bill asking the authorization of an appropriation of \$50,000 to cooperate with the school board at Wolf Point in the extension of a public school building that would be available for the Indian children of the Fort Peck Reservation. (69)

The bill moved slowly through the legal process but by 1935 President Roosevelt had signed the appropriation bill into law. It appeared that the way was clear to begin construction. A letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Collier, however, explained that there was still much to be done. The legislation that had been approved only

authorized the appropriation. It was necessary that the Indian Affairs office prepare an estimate and submit it to Congress through regular channels. (77)

In making its way through Congress, the bill was amended to read that the money would be made available to school districts, but instead of an outright grant, the money was to be repaid over a period of 30 years at three percent interest. This was very disappointing news for all concerned. The Montana representatives in Congress could not stop the amendment without killing the bill. They decided to let the bill go through and to try to strike the clause in the next session. (78)

Hard pressed to provide adequate classroom space for the growing enrollment, the school board elected to accept the loan. Van Teylingen of Great Falls was named as architect of the new addition and the tentative plans called for a large modern gymnasium, two large science rooms and three classrooms. (79)

On Wednesday, October 14, 1936 the bids were let to construct the addition. John Sternhan of Glendive was the successful low bidder with a bid of \$50,400. Changes were made in certain material specifications and a contract price of \$50,868.88 was agreed on. Work was to begin the following week. (80)

During the school year of 1935-1936, in the midst of planning the new addition, two other events occurred.

The trustees at a regular meeting voted not to open the French, Waska and Golden Valley rural schools. These were the first of the 13 rural schools operated by the district to be closed. It was pointed out that the enrollments for rural schools would continue to be a problem until rural roads were improved and rural schools consolidated.

(36) As the years passed more and more of the rural schools were closed until in 1967, the trustees voted to close Victory School, the lone remaining rural school in District 45. Victory School was costing the district about \$7,000 per year to operate and was serving only five pupils. (24)

Another event of the school year 1935-1936 was the cooperative undertaking of School District 45, the National Guard, the Work Projects Administration and the Roosevelt County Commissioners in the building of a new court house.

The National Guard, which at that time had a unit in Wolf Point, pointed out that under the Works Projects Administration the government would supply 80 percent of the funds for the construction of a building to serve the needs of the Guard Company. This offer from the government was flexible and would allow almost any sort of building to be built, providing the requirements of the federal departments or agencies as to the plans and the divisions of the costs could be met.

(81)

The city of Wolf Point could not legally assume any more financial responsibility, so the school district which included the city was asked to use their credit as the beginning of the program. The trustees of District 45 were urged to call an election as soon as possible on the question of issuing bonds in the amount of \$15,000. The trustees agreed to this plan and the election date was set. (81) The bond issue passed and Roosevelt County had a new court house.

During this time construction was proceeding without delay on the high school addition. More money was needed to help furnish the new school when it was completed so Senator B. K. Wheeler and Representative O'Conner introduced a bill for an additional \$50,000 for the Indian school at Wolf Point. Congress failed to pass this bill and the school district was forced to complete the building with the funds available. (82)

The new addition was dedicated in November of 1937. As the funds had been made available through the government for the education of the Fort Peck Indians, Willard Beatty, Director of Indian Education from Washington, D. C. was the main speaker. The Fort Peck Indians were invited to participate and during their part of the program Mr. Livingston was adopted into the tribe and given the name of "Blue Thunder". (83)

One problem, that of housing the growing high school, was solved but out of that solution another problem was growing. It was reflected in the school news columns as Superintendent Livingston used the newspaper to defend the purchases of equipment to stock the new building.

He attempted to explain in detail how the board and he had arrived at the decisions on such matters. (84) It was evident from the tone of his columns that a group of school patrons were challenging his long tenure as superintendent.

On June 14, 1938 a special school election was held to raise 10 mills. Ten mills would raise approximately \$8,000 which was to be used to construct a new Northside School. (86) The levy passed by a two to one vote and the city deeded land on the northside for the site. C. E. Howe of Wolf Point received the contract to build the building for \$7,098.35. It was to be 40 feet by 70 feet with a full basement. A recreation room, showers, toilets and a room for the janitor were to be provided in the basement. The upper floor was to consist of two schoolrooms for accomodating four grades. (87) Construction began and the school was ready for use that fall.

In 1938, the athletic field was provided with floodlights and night football came to Wolf Point. Jim Thorpe, the famous Indian athlete, was the speaker at the dedication of the field. (88) That fall also saw the first convention of the Northeast District of the Montana Education Association ever held. Wolf Point had the honor of hosting that event. (89)

The problems between some of the school patrons and the administration flared anew when a taxpayer's action charging the clerk of School District 45 with embezzlement was filed. According to the

action issued, Mr. Edward Farrell, the clerk, had in a six months period issued warrants to himself totaling \$645.00. The salary of the clerk had been set at \$60.00 per month and the plaintiffs charged that he made illegal payments to himself in the amount of \$285.00. In the accusation they asked "that Mr. Farrell be cited before the court and that if he was found to be guilty; that he be deprived of his office of school clerk; and that he be held liable for the plaintiff's court costs and disbursements". (90)

The case against Mr. Farrell was ordered by the court to be dismissed without prejudice. The money had been repaid and he resigned as clerk of School District 45. In his letter of resignation to the board a further hint of the growing dissatisfaction with the school administration was noted. His letter states in part, "As a lot of unfavorable publicity has been directed at me caused by the internal strife prevailing in this community, I hope by this action that peace and harmony will again be restored". (91)

Peace and harmony were not restored during the remainder of that year. Charges and counter charges were made, the community split on the issue and the end result was that Frank H. Livingston's services expired on July 1, 1939.

The Modern Era

The public school system for the next few years remained essentially the same. A number of barracks were purchased in 1947 from

surplus property stocks and moved to the Southside School site. These were converted into temporary classrooms to relieve the overcrowded classrooms in the Southside School. (4) These "temporary" classrooms served in various capacities for 23 years until they were torn down and moved out in the summer of 1969.

The decision of the Catholic Church to build a new church and grade school in 1949 created a drop in public school enrollment. (5) This, however, was looked upon as a blessing as public school facilities were already beyond capacity.

The Board of Trustees of School District 45, in an effort to modernize the school system and to relieve the overcrowding, went to the voters with a bond issue in 1949. The people responded and in the fall of 1950 work was launched on a new semi-fireproof building. (7)

The building was to house 16 classrooms, a large gymnasium-auditorium with a seating capacity of 3,000, shop, music and home economics departments. Fred A. Brinkman of Kalispell was the architect. The general contracts went to Hitz Construction Company of Billings, plumbing, heating and ventilation by the Johnson Company of Glasgow with the Hi-Line Construction Company of Wolf Point in charge of the electrical work. The total costs of these contracts came to \$692,929.00. (7)

The new high school was completed in time for the opening of the 1952-1953 school term. The gym, which was the pride of the town, had

been dedicated in February of 1952. Two thousand people saw the Glasgow Scotties defeat the Wolves by a score of 57 to 53 in the dedicatory game. (6)

In 1954, the community paid tribute to a long time member of the teaching staff when they presented to Bob Lowry and his wife an all expense paid trip to the Rose Bowl. Mr. Lowry came to Wolf Point in 1935 as a junior high teacher. (11) He became one of the most successful coaches in Montana, winning eight Divisional Championships in football and five State Championships in basketball. Mr. Lowry passed away in 1966 while serving as High School Principal.

The Wolf Point School Board was informed in July of 1954, that under Public Law 815, a grant of \$134,000 was allocated for the purpose of building a new grade school building on the northside. The original application had requested \$220,000. (8) In August word was received that an additional \$44,000 had been granted, bringing the total to \$178,000 available for the new grade school. This money was made available on the basis of pupils coming from homes where the parents work or reside on tax exempt lands. (9)

The school was to be of brick and tile construction containing eight classrooms, a multi-purpose room, administrative offices, lavatories and a boiler room. (10) When the bids were opened in February of 1955 it was found that they were all too high. The board entered into negotiations with the low bidder in an attempt to get the contracts

in line with the federal allocation of \$178,000. The final result was the elimination of the multi-purpose room. This room would have cost approximately \$35,000 which was about the amount of the difference between the bids and the allocation. (12)

Construction began in October of 1955 under the supervision of architects Hoiland and Lund of Great Falls. The contractors were the Smitt Construction Company of Williston, North Dakota, Cummings Plumbing and Heating of Glendive, and Hi-Line Construction of Wolf Point. The total cost of construction was \$184,189.00 of which the district contributed \$6,189. (13) The building was completed by the fall term of 1956.

Once again a hiatus occurred in the growth and expansion of the public school system. In 1962, a dispute between the trustees of School District 45 and the patrons of School District 3, over tuition for District 3 elementary students attending Wolf Point schools, resulted in the building of Frontier School. Upon completion of the building, located three miles east of Wolf Point, District 3 elementary pupils enrolled at their school and the public school enrollment in the city schools dropped by about 100 students. (3)

In January of 1966, Superintendent Milton Negus announced plans for solving the school building problems in Wolf Point. The firm of Cushing, Terrill and Associates of Billings were hired to draw up plans which called for additions to the Northside School, Southside School,

and the High School. (14)

Cited as reasons for the expansion of school facilities were the facts that the Wolf Point schools had exceeded the maximum enrollment per classroom according to the state requirements and that present facilities were becoming radically inadequate with each year. The main cause for concern, however, was the Southside School. (14)

The Southside School built in 1916 had long served its purpose. Parents, teachers and the administration were concerned with its condition. State Fire Marshal William A. Pentilla declared the building a "serious life hazard problem". Some classes were being conducted in the basement and some were in the attic. Two sections of the fourth grade were still in the old "temporary" barracks. (14) Negus stated, "Crowded conditions, safety conditions, and a look at what the situation will be in the next few years makes it essential that corrective measures be enacted now". (14)

Trustees of School District 45 announced that a school bond election would be held on April 16, 1966 for the purposes of constructing additions to the public schools of Wolf Point. (15) Two separate issues were to be voted upon. The elementary bond issue was to raise \$506,160.00 to remove portions of the Southside School and to construct additions onto the North and Southside Schools. The high school issue was to provide \$589,025.00 to construct an addition onto the high school. (16)

The election was held and both the high school and the elementary issues passed by large majorities. Robert Fehlberg, the project architect for Cushing, Terrell Associates, was authorized to proceed with the plans. (17)

Attempts to sell the bonds in July of 1966 resulted in the board refusing the one offer made of 4.55 percent interest. The sale was rescheduled for November and after considerable negotiation, the trustees accepted the bid of 4.55 percent offered. This delay in accepting the earlier identical bid meant a savings of over \$10,000 in interest. With the sale of the bonds the way was now clear to advertise for bids on the construction of the new buildings. (18)

Bids were opened on January 17, 1967. There were four companies present for the bidding and the lowest bid submitted was about \$500,000 over the architect's estimate. It was necessary to take the bids under advisement pending a complete revision of the proposed plans. Paul Stengel, the new Superintendent of Schools, the architect and the trustees were at a loss to explain the great variance between the estimate and the bids. (19)

In February of 1967, a new plan was announced which was believed to be more in line with what the previous bidding had indicated. The new plan affected the high school and the Northside School, where a total of about 19,000 square feet were taken from the proposed buildings. The Southside plans remained unchanged. The architect was instructed

to continue with the plans in order that bids could be called for at the earliest possible date. (20) Matters rested here until March 4, 1967.

The Fire

Responding to an alarm given at 4:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, 1967 the Wolf Point volunteer fire department raced to the high school. Upon arriving at the scene the firemen discovered that the fire in the school had already consumed the second floor on the north end of the building and was rapidly moving through the hallway toward the south end of the building. They were unable to get water out of the hydrant directly across the street from the high school and found it necessary to run their hoses for several blocks in order to obtain water. When they were finally able to get water for fighting the fire it proved of little use. The fire had such a start on them, before they were even called, that most observers believed that even if water had been readily available nothing would have stopped it. (21)

As the fire advanced through the building the only thought now was to contain it to the high school and to salvage what could be saved from the portions of the building as yet untouched by the flames. Crews of volunteers from the community dashed into the building. The gym, the bandroom and the shop were the last areas to be destroyed and much of the equipment from those areas was saved. The fire soon reached those areas and by 7:30 a.m. the entire building was burned out. (21)

The fire was believed to have started in the north end of the building on the second floor. No official cause was ever advanced but an undamaged electrical clock in the boiler room had stopped at 2:14 a.m. indicating that a power failure, possibly a short, had occurred. (21)

As the building continued to smolder, offers of help began to arrive from all over the country. Firemen from Glasgow Air Force Base, Poplar and Nashua had responded to the call. Offers of book and equipment loans poured into the emergency office set up in the Southside School. Many of the schools in the communities surrounding Wolf Point offered to take students into their systems for the remainder of the year. (21)

On Sunday, March 5, the School Board, Superintendent Stengel, High School Principal Safratowich and Elementary Principal Meredith met in the Citizen's Bank to develop a plan to meet the emergency that the school was facing. It was decided that the best way to solve the crisis was to move the Southside elementary students out into temporary classrooms and for the high school to take over that building. (21)

Elementary students reported to school on Monday. Teachers were instructed to pack up their rooms and be prepared to move to new locations on Tuesday. These locations were in the Presbyterian Church, the First Lutheran Church and the Masonic Temple. On Tuesday morning there was no school, as the big job of moving 13 elementary classrooms

intact began. Volunteers from the entire community showed up with trucks and by 4:00 that afternoon the elementary school classrooms were all into their new quarters. Wednesday, school was resumed for all students. The High School, still very short of books, desks and other equipment, had lost two days of school while the elementary students missed only one. (21)

On Wednesday the vault, which had remained intact through the fire, was opened. This vault contained all of the school records and there were fears that the intense heat of the fire might have been more than the vault was capable of withstanding. When the vault was opened the contents of it were for the most part in excellent condition. The only papers that were damaged were copies of papers which had been made by any of the heat transfer processes. (21)

The School Board held a special meeting and a motion was made that the school district proceed as fast as possible on the completion of the elementary school addition plans. The architect for the additions, Robert Fehlberg, was to begin immediately with plans for a new high school. (21)

The following week the board met again in their regular monthly meeting. At that time a structural engineer representing the insurance company told the board that the high school loss was nearly 100 percent. He also recommended immediate demolition of the remains of the building as they were very hazardous. Bids on the demolition were to be called

for. (22)

The high school, the board was told, still faced a big shortage of teaching materials, textbooks and reference materials. In addition the old southside building needed a great deal of electrical work before it could be used as a high school. The "ditto" machines, typewriters and home economics sewing classes could not operate without blowing fuses. There were no lab science areas available and no equipment to use in the event that an area could be found. Arrangements were being made to send students to Poplar twice a week for lab science. (22)

In March, the school board began negotiations to secure more land for the new school. The land surrounding the old site belonged to the Fort Peck tribes. As the old site was determined to be the best location to build the new school and this site consisted of only a little over eight acres of land, an additional 20.62 acres of land was being sought. This transfer of land was to be in the form of an exchange for other land within the city of Wolf Point. Congressional action would be necessary before the transaction could be completed. (23)

The Wolf Point School Board began advertising for bids on the elementary additions to both the Northside and Southside Schools. (23) Bids were opened on April 25, 1967. Braden-Pehlke Construction Company of Glasgow was the low bidder on the Northside addition with a bid of \$171,422. Desonia Construction of Nashua bid a low of \$291,717 for

the Southside general contract. Total cost of the two additions including mechanical and electrical bids amounted to \$466,849. This amount when subtracted from the \$1,080,000 which had been sold in bonds, left \$613,151 for the construction of a new high school. (25)

A settlement was reached with the insurance company in May of 1967 when the Board of Trustees received \$892,949.23 for reconstruction and equipping of the high school. This gave the board about \$1.4 million between the insurance settlement money and funds remaining from the bonds with which to build the high school. (26)

Superintendent Stengel indicated that a high school with a minimum of 80,000 square feet had to be considered. It was felt that if the high school were to cost as much as the Northside and Southside additions, about \$18 per square foot, the actual cost would be \$1.44 million or slightly more than the board had to spend. (26)

The building, when final plans were approved, was designed to have a total of 90,000 square feet. It was felt by the administration that this was necessary to meet all the needs of the school for the immediate future. Based on the construction cost of the Northside and Southside Schools, it was estimated that this structure would cost about \$1,620,000. This figure did not include architects fees, site improvements, landscaping or replacement of equipment not fully covered by the insurance. The total cost of the overall site and building was estimated at \$1,780,000. (27)

The School Board decided to ask the patrons of the school district for the remainder of their bonding capacity in an election to be held in September. The total amount to be requested was \$310,000. (27) Once again the voters of the district voted five to one in favor of the bond issue. Total money now available amounted to \$1,750,000. (30)

In the meantime, the high school and elementary schools opened for business as usual on August 28, 1967. The high school was still using the Southside School and had adapted to their quarters in various ways. Students were scheduled for a seven period day and study halls were eliminated. The Home Economics and Industrial Arts Departments were moved to vacant buildings in downtown Wolf Point. The band and chorus classes were installed in the ballroom of the local Elk's lodge and the school provided a shuttle bus to transport students to and from their classes. (28)

The elementary classes were still in their temporary rooms in churches, lodges and basements that were assigned to them following the fire. Some of these areas were so small and so cramped for space that the desks were placed side by side. It was necessary for a pupil sitting on the inside to slide from seat to seat to reach his desk. If a pupil happened to be absent for the day, his desk was moved out of the room in order to gain a little more space at least for the day. (28)

Construction work on the elementary additions continued despite some minor interruptions. High winds blew a newly constructed wall of the Northside School down. (29) It was believed that these additions would be ready to move into during the Christmas vacation. This goal was not met. The elementary students finally moved out of their temporary quarters into the new Southside School on March 16, 1968. (33) It had been just slightly over one year from the date of the fire.

Bid letting for the new high school was held in December of 1967. Lowe Construction Company of Billings was the low bidder with a bid of \$1,299,800. The board adopted nine of 12 alternates to be included in the construction which brought the total up to \$1,444,900. These alternates included folding doors, vinyl fabric in the classrooms, terrazzo in the lobby, auditorium seating, gymnasium seating, concrete walks, football field and a fire sprinkler system. Construction was to begin as soon as possible. (31) In February, the final act in the land transfer took place when the Bureau of Land Management, acting under the Department of the Interior, issued a land deed to the school district thus paving the way for construction to begin. (32)

Recognizing the long and detailed work that the Board of Trustees had put in since the fire, the local unit of the Montana Education Association nominated them for the Thom McAn School Award. The award was one of 24 national awards made that year. They are given in order

to "spotlight outstanding examples of dedication and devotion on the part of lay citizens who have accepted the charge and the trust to improve our public schools and our children by serving their local boards of education". The award was presented to the trustees during the commencement exercises. (33)

The long ordeal following the disastrous fire came to an end on September 15, 1969 when school, delayed two weeks due to final construction, opened. The new high school was ready, the old Southside School had been demolished and the Wolf Point public schools were once again in business.

The Schools of Today

With the completion of the high school, School District 45 has three school plants which have been built or added to within the last two years. In addition one of the older buildings is still seeing some limited service. A brief description of those buildings follows:

Old Northside School. This building built in 1938 is still maintained by the district. It was used during the 1968-1969 school year to house part of the junior high school classes pending completion of the high school. It now serves as an elementary band practice room and storage warehouse for district property.

Southside School. The new Southside School consists of an addition built around the gymnasium of the 1937 addition. It is a round building containing 12 classrooms, two special education rooms, a

teacher's workroom and an office area. The inner areas of the building have been utilized for a health room, lavatories, kitchen, boiler room and storage. Five of the classrooms of the 1937 addition were also retained. These areas have been put into service as a central library, a music and band room, office space and extra classrooms. The gym is used for junior high athletics and elementary P. E.

Northside School. The original building, built in 1956, containing eight classrooms was enlarged by the addition of four classrooms, a library, a teacher's workroom, storage area, boys and girls locker rooms, a kitchen and a multi-purpose room.

High School. The new Wolf Point High School has 25 classrooms. In addition there are special areas such as Shop, Arts and Crafts, two study halls, a kitchen, library, Journalism, Typing, Home Economics, Language Laboratory, and office practice rooms. The school district offices as well as the junior and senior high school principal's offices are located in this building. The gym was built to seat 3,000 spectators and the auditorium will seat 453. There are separate band and chorus rooms as well as practice rooms in each area. A teacher's lounge, guidance offices with three conference rooms, and three locker room facilities have also been provided.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The history of Montana records that as the territory became a state and more and more people settled here, a need for education was felt. This need was met as schools were established and through the efforts of many people working together, the educational system was improved as the state grew.

The history of Wolf Point closely parallels the history of the state educational growth. As transportation improved and the land opened up for the homesteader, the city of Wolf Point grew. This growth in population stimulated the creation of a public school in 1911. The early schools of the church and government could no longer serve the community.

The first school built in Wolf Point established a tradition that carries on today. When the community requested funds to build a school building and were refused, three prominent men of the community advanced the necessary money with no thought of repayment. This early example of a willingness to sacrifice in order to provide an education to the youth of Wolf Point has been demonstrated many times over the years.

As the years passed, and the need for improved facilities arose, the trustees, staff and community responded to that need. By cooperative

effort, either in the form of levies upon themselves or in the securing of funds from the federal government, the school buildings were built.

Disaster, in the form of fire that completely destroyed the high school in 1967, was responded to again with cooperative effort. The trustees and staff put in many long hours in the rebuilding efforts. The taxpayers were willing once again to play their part in meeting the emergency by voting overwhelmingly to pay for the new building.

Conclusions

Wolf Point has perhaps the newest total school plant in Montana. All of the public school buildings in daily use have been built or added onto in the past two years. They are the products of no one man but are the result of the trustees, staff and patrons of the district working together to achieve a common goal.

According to current population trends these facilities, barring another disaster or an unforeseen growth of population, should serve the district for many years. Therefore, the task of continuing to provide the best education possible in those facilities remains as the challenge. This task can be accomplished with the continued cooperative efforts of the trustees, the professional staff and the people of School District 45.

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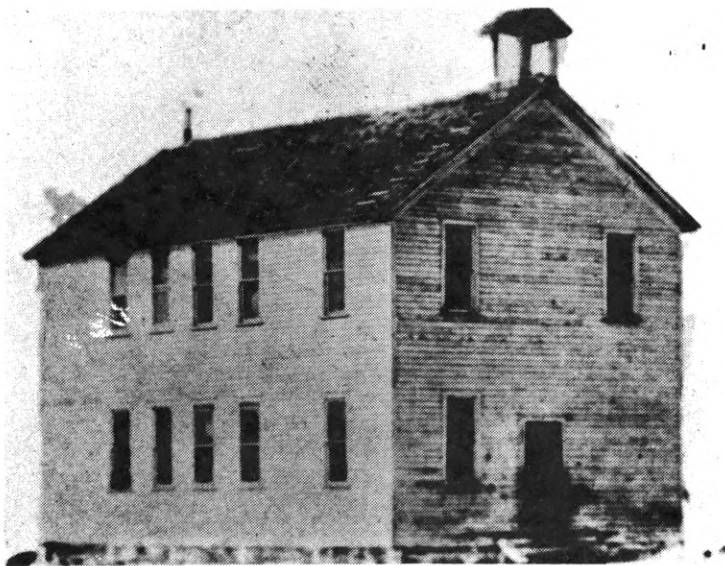
APPENDIX

APPENDIX A
Public School Buildings
Wolf Point, Montana
1912-1969



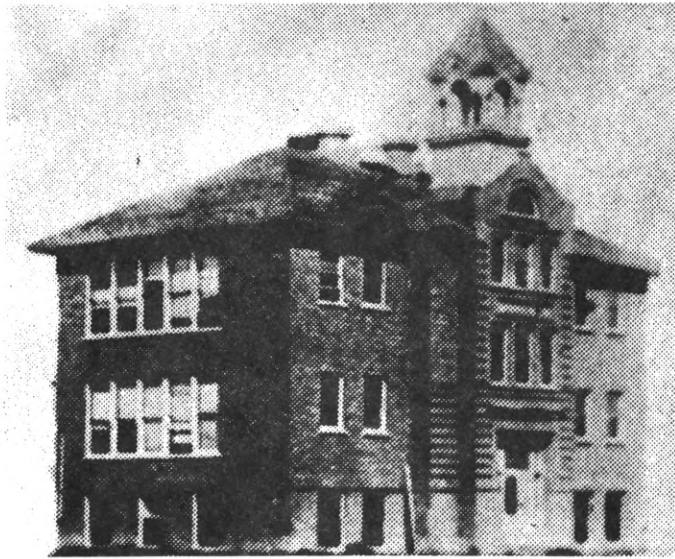
First School

1912



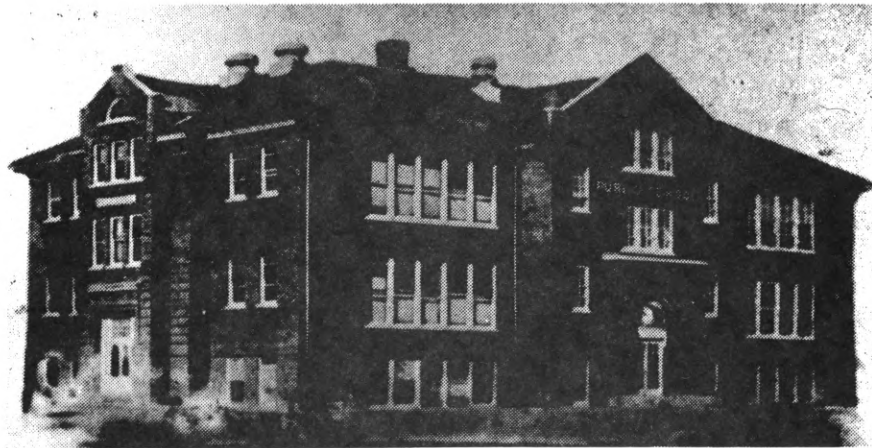
Second School

1914



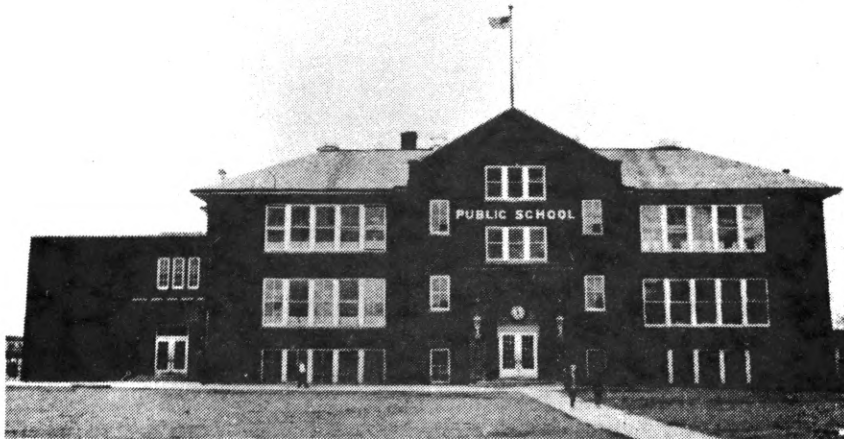
Southside School

1916



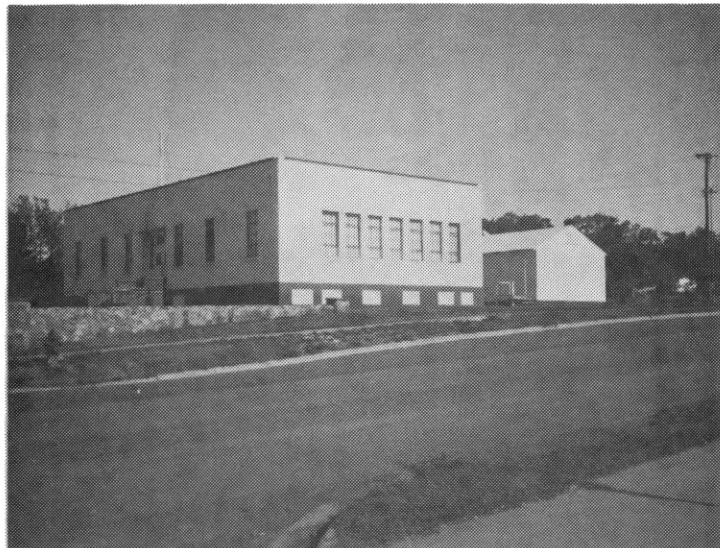
Southside School

1918



Southside School

1937



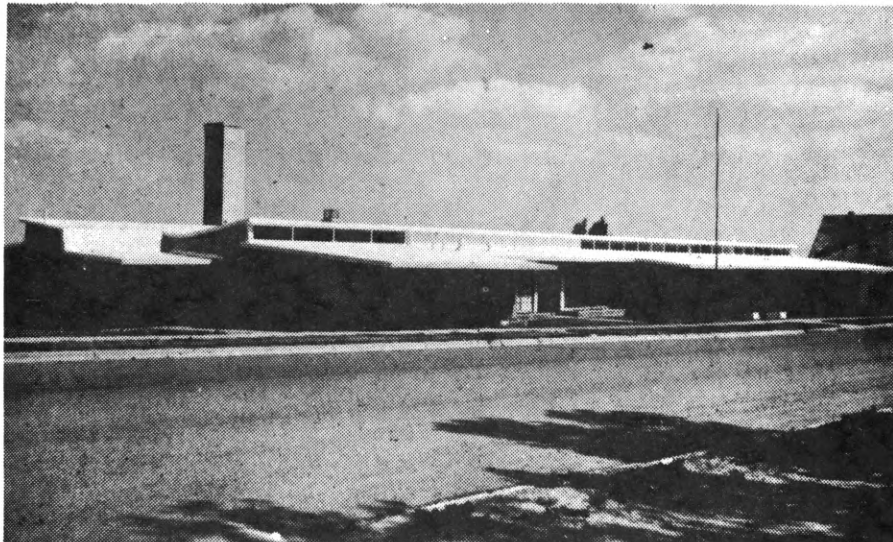
Northside School

1938



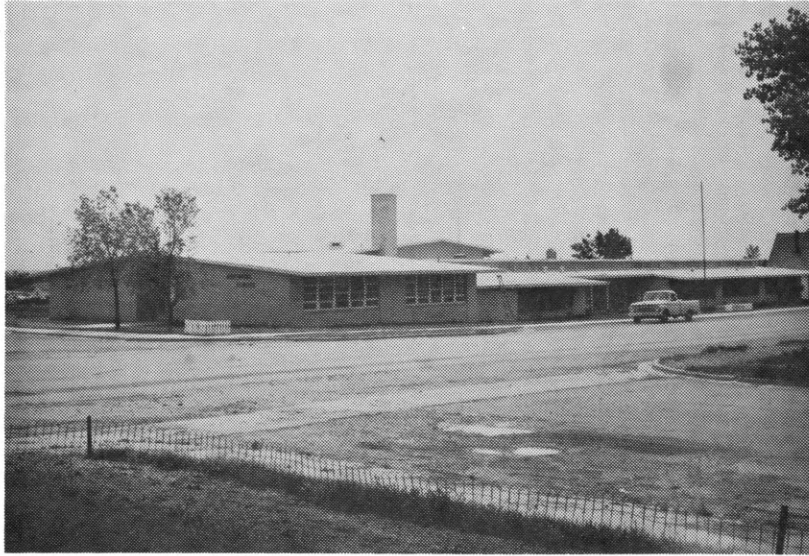
High School

1952



Northside School

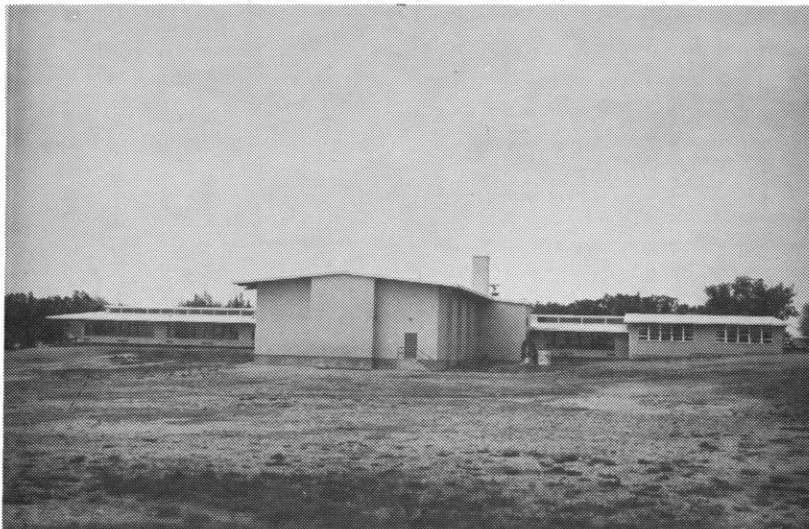
1956



Northside School

West View

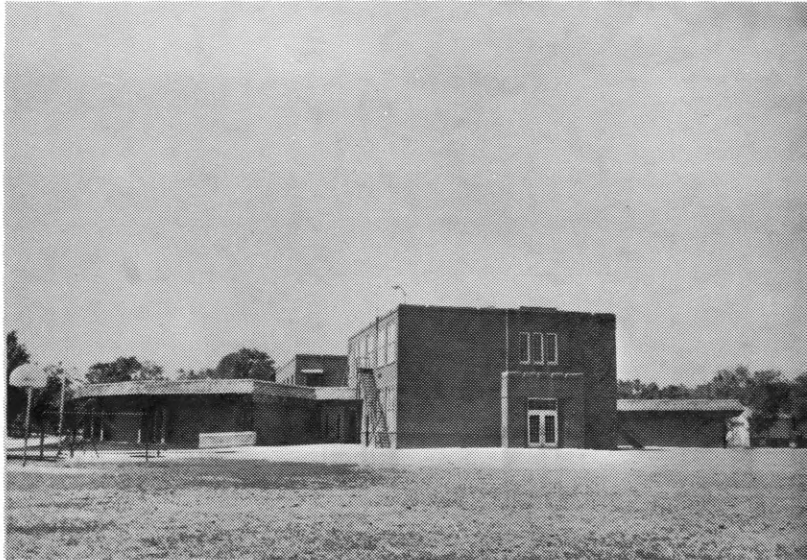
1968



Northside School

East View

1968



Southside School

East View

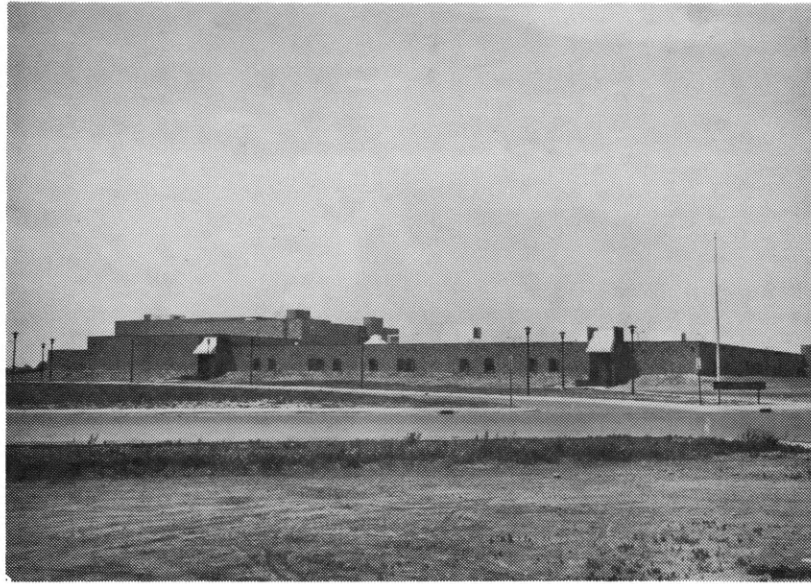
1968



Southside School

West View

1968



High School

South View

1969



High School

North View

1969

Appendix B

Public School Enrollment

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1911-1912	17
1912-1913	65
1913-1914	88
1914-1915	118
1915-1916	167
1916-1917	200
1917-1918	437
1918-1919	421
1919-1920	421
1920-1921	525
1921-1922	584
1922-1923	537
1923-1924	545
1924-1925	575
1925-1926	587
1926-1927	569
1927-1928	561
1928-1929	571
1929-1930	582
1930-1931	594
1931-1932	600
1932-1933	671
1933-1934	729
1934-1935	751
1935-1936	761
1936-1937	794
1937-1938	706
1938-1939	738
1939-1940	704
1940-1941	799
1941-1942	775
1942-1943	863
1943-1944	735
1944-1945	762
1945-1946	760
1946-1947	767
1947-1948	791

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1948-1949	781
1949-1950	688*
1950-1951	699
1951-1952	748
1952-1953	913
1953-1954	959
1954-1955	944
1955-1956	963
1956-1957	1,012
1957-1958	1,049
1958-1959	1,105
1959-1960	1,209
1960-1961	1,236
1961-1962	1,340
1962-1963	1,354
1963-1964	1,295**
1964-1965	1,382
1965-1966	1,357
1966-1967	1,242
1967-1968	1,236
1968-1969	1,246
1969-1970	1,260

* Catholic Elementary School opened.

** District 3, Frontier Elementary School opened.

Appendix C

Superintendents 1911-1970

Alf O. Vaala	1911-1913
Frank Kenny	1913-1918
Frank H. Livingston	1918-1939
Milo Johnson	1939-1943
E. Ford Slaght	1943-1956
Clifford A. Harmala	1956-1964
Milton K. Negus	1964-1966
Paul E. Stengel	1966-

Trustees 1914-1970

Charles M. Hansen	1914-1915	
John Listerud	1914-1915	
C. E. Robin	1914-1915	
O. T. Stennes	1915-1917	
George G. Kirk	1916-1917	
F. E. Rathert	1916-1921	
John F. Cook	1917-1920	
Earl L. Champlin	1918-1922	
A. F. Toavs	1919-1927	
Theodore Kline	1919-1922	
L. A. Kragrud	1920-1921	
O. C. Johnson	1920-1923	1924-1930
J. B. Switzer	1921-1924	
Robert S. Jelly	1922-1928	
H. A. Schoening	1922-1925	
J. H. Coffey	1923-1925	1933-1934
John Randall	1924-1925	
J. C. Herman	1926-1931	
J. R. Burgess	1926-1932	
George H. Flint	1927-1933	
Christ Sands	1927-1933	
Amon O. Johnson	1928-1929	
Bert Norby	1930-1934	
William Minderman	1932-1939	
W. C. Johnson	1931-1935	
V. A. Lovell	1932-1934	
Melvin Gunderson	1934-1938	
Nels Lund	1934-1937	
P. R. Dougherty	1934-1937	

Carl R. Moe	1935-1938	
Gladys Bowker	1937-1940	
L. M. Clayton, Sr.	1937-1940	
A. J. Isachsen	1938-1939	
Rev. Francis J. Shevlin	1938-1941	
Albert Lee	1939-1945	
W. O. Dolven	1939-1943	
J. M. Muus	1940-1942	
N. F. Toavs	1940-1948	
Charles Rathert	1941-1944	1945-1954
Morris Listerud	1942-1943	
Dr. R. D. Knapp	1943-1969	
Oliver Montgomery	1943-1954	
J. C. Moses	1944-1950	
Theodore T. Toavs	1948-1958	
Kenneth E. Voss	1950-1962	
Baxter Larson	1954-1960	
Norven Langager	1954-1960	
Donald Sethre*	1956-1960	
Robert Berry	1958-1970	
Mike Fachner	1960-1963	
Douglas E. Mahlum	1960-1966	
Earl Rensvold*	1960-1966	
Burk Taylor	1962-1965	
Clifford M. Hansen	1963-	
Charles Taylor*	1963-1964	
Edward Bach*	1964-1970	
Kermit Tjon	1965-	
William C. Reichert	1966-1967	
Ted Schwinden*	1966-1969	
Dennis D. Casey	1967-	
Robert Dusenbury*	1969-	
Henry H. Arndt	1970-	
Burle Nygaard	1970-	
Robert Hauge*	1970-	

* Member of High School District 45A from District 3.