

BURBANK SCHOOL HISTORY

The Burbank Elementary School had ten classrooms serving kindergarten through six and special education. Circuit teachers offer music, art, physical education, math and reading labs. A well stocked library and a nutritious lunchroom program fed both mind and body.

A village map of 1873 shows two schools within the village proper with one-room schools still dotting the countryside. Located on the west side of Mill Street north of Trinity United Methodist Church was a grade school and directly opposite was the “Academy”, built about 1837 as the first Methodist church in Burbank, converted into a three-year high school in 1873.

In 1884 a new school was built on land adjacent to the present building. The two-story frame building housed elementary pupils on the first floor and a three-year high school on the second. Commencements were held at the M.E. Church to accommodate more people. The first was held June 11, 1885, with four seniors. Commencement week exercises lasted several days and included lectures, entertainment and reunions before the final graduation program.

The west side of the present building was built in 1910. It boasted four large rooms and two unfinished basement rooms used for rainy day play. Burbank residents Paul and Ruth Byers Lance were two new first graders attending the new school. She remembers the steps inside the new building looking very big and steep the first time the doors were opened for use in 1911. They graduated together in 1923 and Ruth returned to the school later as a first grade teacher.

With growing census high school students from the frame building were spilling over into the new grade school building. Conditions became crowded once again and it was decided to build an addition.

A 1921 addition housed the new four-year high school, a combination auditorium-gymnasium, home economics, industrial arts and agriculture rooms and a chemistry lab. Five graduated in the class of 1922.

The needed bond issue at the time of building brought on a series of protests and the same kind of violent arguments indulged in yet today by taxpayers. Bitter opponents for and against the high school addition in 1921 got into regular “cussing matches” calling each other penny taxpayers and worse!

In early days getting to school was not a routine matter of boarding a school bus. Unless a family could spare a horse for a day, it was more often a long walk that delivered a child to school.

In the 1930's the last "kidwagon" (team and covered wagon) was driven by Tom Timic, who hauled his own and neighboring youngsters to school. The new busses were owned by the drivers at first, later becoming board purchases.

The outside water pump (with communal dipper) and other outside facilities were moved indoors. Coal furnaces changed to gas and last-day-of-school picnics gave way to field trips.

A girl's high school basketball team won second place in county competition in 1927. The 1927 boy's team also won the consolation tourney at Kent.

Tragedy befell the community the night of January 4, 1930. A busload of students traveling home through a sleet storm was struck by a train in Shreve following a successful basketball game. Seven students were killed and others seriously injured. The dead included Willard Baker, 13; Claude Repp, 17; Forest Grub, 16; Wilbur Grubb, 14; Wayne Lehman, 14; Emil Timic, 16; and Eugene Tally, 18.

Track history was made in Wayne County in 1944 by Burbank senior Calvin Yost. He graduated with nine high school records to his credit after being in competition only two years. Several of these were not broken for years. Being a farm boy, Yost had many chores; his coach once plowed for him all night to free Yost for competition the next day.

In March, 1947, an arsonist's fire caused heavy damage to the school. The blaze damaged the auditorium, agriculture room, chemistry lab, study hall and office.

The present gymnasium and extra rooms were added to the south end of the building about 1959-60 and the old gym made into classrooms.

Eighteen seniors graduated from the last high school class at Burbank and the high school was no more. Burbank, Creston and Sterling schools had consolidated into the North Central Local School District.

Seventh and eighth graders from the three elementary schools were moved into the Creston building in 1972.

In 1988 a new five classroom addition was built on to the southeast part of the building and Burbank School became one of North Central's two elementary schools housing students in grades kindergarten through fourth. The other elementary school was in Sterling and Creston School became a middle school for the district's students in grades five through eight. There was a teaching staff of ten based in the school and traveling teachers for music, art and physical education served students in both elementary buildings on a rotating basis. Marlin Simms was the building principal until he retired in 1993. Lois Gasser served as building secretary and Janet Anderson was office/teacher aide. Some of the veteran teachers included Mary Garver Allen, reading, and classroom teachers Marian Romich, Ivan Yoder, Charles Herr, Leo Wilcox, Carole Steiner, Ron Forrer, Nancy McIlvaine, Marlene Romich Collins and Alice Slater Pamer.

In 1992 a federally funded preschool program was instituted under the direction of a retired Superintendent, Richard Holmes, and it became one of the first public school operated preschool programs in the county. Andy Froelich became principal in 1993 and the staff expanded over the years to include a special education teacher, a math lab tutor and classroom aides in specialized areas. Jay McDougal served as custodian and Brenda Cover was lunchroom manager for many years serving the students and staff of Burbank School.

In 2006 a bond issue was passed by North Central voters to partner with the State of Ohio in the construction of a new elementary school to house North Central's entire elementary population – grades Pre-K through five in one building. The new elementary school located on a property adjacent to Norwayne High School opened to students on January 5, 2010, with 530 students enrolled. Both Burbank and Sterling elementary buildings were closed and the remaining furnishings were put up for auction on March 6 & 13, 2010. The auctioneer for this event was Wilbur Bowers who attended Burbank School and graduated from Norwayne High School in 1954.

On January 1, 2010, the district's name was changed to Norwayne Local Schools making it the only Norwayne District in the State of Ohio.

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