

STERLING SCHOOL HISTORY

In the early 1870's each of the nine schools in Milton Township was housed in a one-room frame building. One of these was No. 3 at Sterling, north of the railroad tracks. In the 1880's a high school was built.

The first graduating class recorded was in 1904 with two graduates: Earl Kissinger and Walter Penrod. County superintendent was Simon Miller, a native of Sterling, with C. B. Ferguson as local superintendent and Ed Hart as principal.

A new brick school was built in 1921-22 about a mile south of the first school. It was known as Milton Local School for grades 1 through 12.

The P.T.A. was active and soon organized a hot lunch program for 10 cents a meal. Parents met at the school and canned surplus fruit and vegetables donated for the lunch program. Cooks hired by the P.T.A. were Emma Jordan and Mae Lance. During the late 1920's and 1930's the P.T.A. sponsored community plays given at the Farmer's Institute, held in the school building.

Over the years one-room schools were closed. In 1940 the last three one-room schools, numbers 7, 8 and 9, were closed.

Eighth grade commencements featured programs by the graduates consisting of plays, skits, dialogues, and an operetta.

The high school had several county championship basketball teams, both boys and girls. However, the gymnasium was unpopular with visiting teams because of the low ceiling and, when it rained, the wet floor. Added to the building in 1941 were a new gymnasium-auditorium and two classrooms, as well as a single room to the front of the building in 1981.

In 1951-52 Burbank, Creston, and Milton Local consolidated to form the North Central School District. Roy Sinclair, who had been superintendent of Milton Local since 1937, became superintendent. Milton Local School became Sterling Elementary with Lawrence Mann as principal and in 1968, Wilbur Bowers.

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The senior class of 1953 was the last to graduate from Sterling. The Board of Education consisted of Nelson Gordon, President; Kenneth Badger, VP; Homer Miller, Mrs. J.C. (Miriam) Murray, Ward Oller and Neil McCoy, Clerk. The teachers were Roy E. Sinclair, Superintendent; Lawrence Mann, Principal; High School: Arthur Locke, Theodore Fleming, Dale Turner, Barbara Bixler, Robert Barger, Lynn Welker, Robert DeMass, Martha Permar, Donald Garver, Paul Kasapis, Paul Soldner, Don Cicconetti, Ardyth Moore; Grades: Esther Lance 6, Wilma Rich 5, Goldie Wurgler 4, Ruby Lewis 3, Zella Blanc 2, Louise Bruny 1. 1953 News: Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower is President of the U.S. Joseph Stalin, the world's most heinous genocidist, dies in Russia. The Rosenbergs, accused of passing information on atomic weapons to Russian agents were executed for espionage. Russia explodes a Hydrogen Bomb. The Korean Armistice is signed. The first issue of TV Guide hits the newsstands. Playboy Magazine also hits the newsstands with Marilyn Monroe on the cover. The NY Yankees win the World Series. Scientists discover the double-helical structure of DNA. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reach the top of Mt. Everest. The opening of Norwayne High School in the fall of 1953 left room for a kindergarten. However, with increased student enrollment by 1961, the kindergarten moved to the United Methodist Church. Also, one of the first Special Education classes was started in Sterling in 1955.

In 1957 the P.T.A. reorganized. In the 1970's affiliation was transferred to that of the P.T.O. The annual Smorgasbord and Public Auction sponsored by the P.T.O. became a tradition. Parents donated food and hours of work for those money-making projects. The auction depended upon the many donations by parents and business establishments. Funds raised were used to sponsor special projects for the benefit of students and teachers.

In 1971 the seventh and eighth grades moved to the district junior high at Creston and Sterling housed kindergarten through sixth grade.

In 1988 a new art room addition was built on to the east side of the building and Sterling School became one of North Central's two elementary schools housing students in grades kindergarten through fourth. The other elementary school was in Burbank 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. Wilbur Bowers was the building principal until he retired in 1990. Clara Schaffter served as

building secretary and Lucille Hostetler was office/teacher aide. Some of the veteran teachers included Sally Allen, Joan Bise, Rose Cunningham, Helen McCoy, Maxine Smith and Ila Zimmerly.

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. Jim Lyons became principal in 1990 and the staff expanded over the years to include a special education teacher, a math lab tutor and classroom aides in specialized areas. Bill Russell served as custodian and Ann Wilson was lunchroom manager for many years serving the students and staff of Sterling 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.