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DEDICATION — SEPTEMBER 14, 1985





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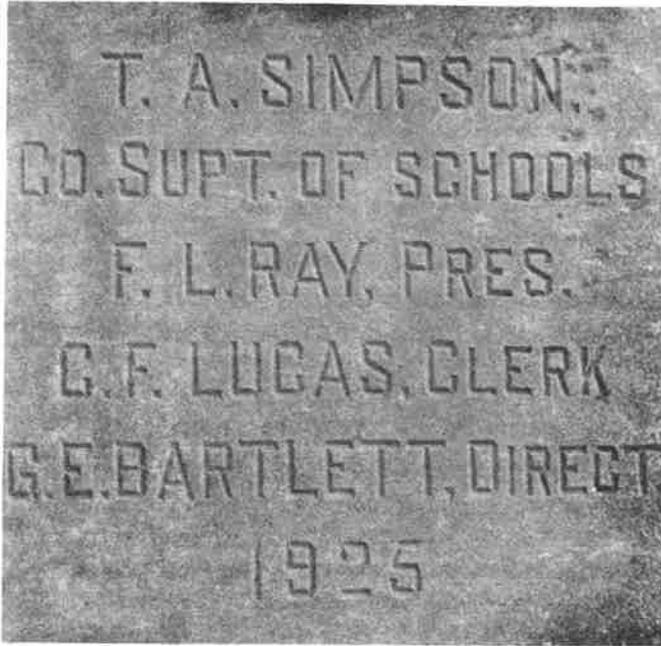
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Cornerstone of Wadsworth School listing the school board officers active in 1925 when Wadsworth School was built. Also listed is the county superintendent at the time. We were not able to locate a picture of C.F. Lucas.



Cornerstone of Wadsworth School.



T.A. Simpson - County Supt. of Schools in 1925.



Mr. Fred Ray - president of Wadsworth School board in 1925.



Mr. George Bartlett - Director of Wadsworth School in 1925.

HISTORY OF WADSWORTH SCHOOL

1847-1873

Although the brick school house that is being dedicated today, Sept. 14, 1985, is noted as being built in 1925 this was actually the fourth school house that was built in Wadsworth. The earliest records that could be obtained state that Wadsworth School (District #7, Township 46) was officially organized in 1847.

Wadsworth was sparsely populated in 1847 and most of the people living in Wadsworth were farmers. There was no organized "town" of Wadsworth where the local settlers could buy basic supplies. Wadsworth was basically just a collection of farms. The closest major towns were Little Fort (Waukegan), Southport (Kenosha) and Chicago. The early settlers had to travel to one of these towns for supplies and to sell their goods. Since horses were scarce, more often than not the trip into town was made on foot. Sometimes the trip to town would be made with an oxen team. A great portion of the original settlers in Wadsworth seemed to be of Irish origins, however there were some other countries of origin that were represented. Some of the first settlers in Wadsworth were Jeremiah Shea, Mr. Lux, J. Cook, A.A. Cottrell, John DeLany, Edmund Bartlett, G.J. Bingham and John Alcock.

The first school meeting was held in 1847 in the home of Jeremiah Shea. Mr. A.A. Cottrell was appointed Chairman and Mr. J. Cook, Secretary. The directors elected for that term were G.J. Bingham, Edmund Bartlett and John DeLany.

The first school house was a log building which was replaced after a few years by an oak frame building. Both buildings were located on John DeLany's farm just south of Bartlett's corner. Mr. DeLany would not sell the land for the site, but gave the district the privilege of building the schoolhouse on it. The log school house and the frame school house were both built by the united efforts of the men in the district; everyone "got out" and helped.



John DeLany, one of the original settlers in Wadsworth.

Previous to 1850 the school was financed by contribution, each patron paying so much at the school election or occasionally a man was appointed to collect. The frame school house was 18' by 20' with seven windows in the front of the room and three on each side. The walls were whitewashed and in the center of the room was a large box stove.

The furniture of this school was very rude and made out of rough lumber. The first teachers desk and chair remained in the district for years in the Bartlett family. The desk was rudely constructed of boards but the chair was made of black walnut with the seat being strips of leather. The chair was one of a set given as a wedding present to the original Mrs. Bartlett who settled in Wadsworth. The pupils desks were built of boards around the sides of the walls and faced the center of the room. The back seats were benches which would seat about six pupils. The desks for the same were set on a raised platform. They had no maps or charts. The primer and the Spelling book were the main books used in the early schools. The schools were not graded but went according to classes, as first, second and up to the third. Sometimes a pupil read out of the primer for two or three terms. The terms were very short with several terms occurring in one year. Also, there was no mandatory attendance so pupils showed up when they were not needed at home.



The first teacher's desk and chair used in the first Wadsworth School in 1847.

Some of the early pupils were:

T.C. French, D.E. French, D.J. French, C.C. French, Michael DeLany, Martin DeLany, Mary DeLany, Edmund Bartlett, J.C. Devine, Eliza Cottrell, Ciba Cook, John Shea, Helen Lux, Peter Lux, Charles Lux, & Margaret Shea.

This building remained there until 1856, when it was moved south about one quarter of a mile, on land owned by John Pope. Mr. Francis Knoll moved it for eight dollars. During this time the school added a very good set of maps that were hung on the walls.

The first teacher was M.A. Hubbell. For his service he received seven dollars and twenty-one cents. In 1848, M.A. Hubbell, and A.L. Vaughn taught. The latter received for his services five dollars and forty-six cents. In 1849 Malvina Spencer taught for one dollar and fifty cents per week. She boarded with Edmund Bartlett, for seventy-five cents a week. This was paid by the district. Her term was eleven weeks and three days for which she received seventeen dollars and fifty cents. Mr. Bartlett received for her board, eight dollars and sixty-three cents. The teachers who followed were:

Mary Kennedy	1850	\$1.50/week
Samuel Avory	1850	\$47.10 for 16 months
Ruth Avory	1851	\$1.50/week
Elija Cottrell	1852	2.00/week
O.E. Freeman	1852	1.50/week
Jane Risly	1852	2.25/week
Harriett Newell	1853	1.50/week
Peter Finney	1854	15/month
Hamilton Ames	1856	28.00/month
Debra McKee	1857	2.00/week
Hamilton Ames	1857	20.00/mo.
C. Field	1857	2.00/week
Hamilton Ames	1858	26.00/wk.
Mary Dooly	1958	2.00/wk.
Frederick Kent	1859	20.00/mo.
Amelia Smith	1859	2.00/wk.
Miss Shinski	1860	
Charles Howe	1861	18.00/mo.
Charles Howe	1862	24.00/mo.
Ellin Brown	1862	1.75/wk.
Eliza Miller	1863	17.00/mo.
Mary Jeroshinski	1864	2.00/wk.
Martin DeLany	1865	26.00/mo.
Susanna Forgan	1865	2.00/wk.
Martin DeLany	1866	35.00/mo.
Mary Boyce	1866	10.00/mo.
Basil Jeroshinski	1867	28.50/mo.
Elizabeth Jeroshinski	1867	2.00/wk.
John DeLany	1868	30.00/mo.
Grace Wilson	1869	20.00/mo.
Jos. Jeroshinski	1869	37.50/mo.
Thomas McLory	1870	38.00/mo.
Eliz. Jeroshinski	1870	20.00/mo.
John DeLany	1871	38.00/mo.
Annie Alcox	1871	4.50/wk.
John Myer	1872	35.00/mo.
Mary Daily	1872	20.00/mo.

Generally, the teachers boarded in one of the homes of the district. Miss Daily was the last teacher to teach in the old frame school.



Mr. & Mrs. John Shea - early settlers in Wadsworth.

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ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF WADSWORTH SCHOOL

Sterling Sept 18th 1847
 at a meeting of the Voters of School
 District No 7 in the township aforesaid
 held at the house of Shea Affonted -
 A. A. Cottrell Chairman and J. Cook Secretary
 Chose G. Bingham Edmund Bartlett and
 John Delany Directors for the ensuing term
 Amos A. Cottrell Chair
 J. Cook Secretary

A handwritten record from 1847 of the first school board meeting in Wadsworth.

A Poll list for the election of Directors
 held at the schoolhouse in District No 7
 Aug 1st 1864
 Informal Poll
 John Pope 11111
 Daniel Hagerty 11111
 Direct Poll
 John Pope 11111
 Daniel Hagerty 11111

A Poll list from 1864 election of director of Wadsworth School. Running for director were John Pope and Daniel Hagerty.

Informal Ballot from early years of Wadsworth School.

Informal Ballot
John Demuth III III
John Delaney I

Formal Ballot
John Demuth IIIIIII
John Lutz II
John Delaney I

John Demuth Elected.

Set the contract to purchase
first cords of good dry wood to
John Aheix for \$3.70 per cord

Mentioned and recorded that
we have 6 months school
the remaining year we have a school
that we will commence in
the middle of July

Old receipt dated 1854 from Wadsworth School.

\$34 ⁶⁴/₁₀₀

Rec^d from Mr. Cooke the sum of thirty four ⁶⁴/₁₀₀ dollars, being in part payment of school bill. See me.

Peter Quincy

Waukegan April 5th 1854

Rec^d of P. Geelan \$5.89 ⁰⁰/₁₀₀ for tuition as a boy.



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Friday — 4:00 to 11:00

Saturday — 5:00 to 10:00

Sunday — 1:00 to 9:00

PH. 336-0262

Rt. 41 & Wadsworth Road

Wadsworth, IL

SCHOOL DISTRICT
No. Seven

Downship 46 Range 11.
Scale 4 in = 1 mile.

Map of Wadsworth drawn by school children at
Wadsworth School in 1917-1918.

Elizabeth
ALCOCK

W. H.
Boies

Laura
E.
Wauqh

W. H.
Boies

E. M. Bartlett John
ALCOCK

J. J. Traynor Julia
Demuth

Margaret
De Lany

H. O.
Brown

J. S.
De
Muth

J.
Cudohy

Jim
Lahey

Frank
Rahling

Laura Mary John A.
Ray D. Shea
Bartlett J.

Jim
Lahey E. M.
Bartlett

E. M. M. Carman
Bartlett E. Church

J. Cashmore
Wm. Wadell J. Shea

J. M. Lux
H. Schlosser

J. J. Woolston Henry
Lux
C. M. McCarthy
Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & N. P.
Peaches River.



1874-1925

By 1872-73 Wadsworth was really growing. The main reason for this was that the Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad was completed with Wadsworth being one of two stops that the train made in Newport township. At all stations where agents were in charge, there were telegraph and express offices, usually operated by the station agents, and a large amount of general business was done. It was at this time that the town of Wadsworth received its' name. The name Wadsworth was given to this newly constructed station in Newport township by a man whose name was Mr. Elisha Wadsworth. The Lux's, who donated and sold most of the land that the railroad was constructed on in Wadsworth, wanted the town to be named Luxville, or Luxburg. However, Mr. Wadsworth, being the largest stockholder in the railroad, ultimately won out.

As a result of all trains between Chicago and Milwaukee stopping in Wadsworth the downtown section of Wadsworth flourished. Farmers from all over Newport township would bring their milk to town and stay to do their shopping at the Wadsworth stores. The farmers and local populations could shop at three general stores, a meat market, feed store, blacksmith shop and warehouse. There was also a barber shop, a dance hall, 2 brick yards, a butter or cream factory, a post office and a number of basket makers.

The first postmaster was Charles Goodwin and he was appointed on Feb. 9, 1874. He operated the Post Office from a boxcar at the railroad station. On April 9, 1975 Thomas Strang was appointed postmaster and he served the people for 38 years. At this point, the post office was a small building located on the north side of Wadsworth Rd.

At a school board meeting in April 5, 1873 a motion was made for a new school house. It was agreed that a meeting be held in 2 weeks for the purpose of discussing the necessity of a new school house. A vote was taken. Ten votes were cast and all in favor of the new school. A vote was then taken to locate a site. It was decided to be either Demuth's or Hagerty's corner. Finally it was decided to have the building on Demuth's corner, which would be more central. The size of the new school was 32' by 22' and 12' high. The old school house was then sold and moved to Wadsworth Rd. where a section of it still stands as part of Mrs. Marion Nadelhoffer's house.

The site of one half acre priced at \$50.00 was purchased from John Demuth. The contract for the building was given to H.C. Biddlecom. The building was lathed by Cornelius Shea, plastered by Sam Miller and painted by Samuel Griggs. The lumber was hauled from Kenosha by Mr. E. M. Bartlett and Mr. J.C. Devine. The furniture was purchased from the Nat'l. School Furniture Comp., costing \$150.00.

The school building was a white wooden frame building heated by a small pot-bellied stove. The fuel was coal and wood. There were benches and double desks for seating. The floor was rough with knots protruding from the boards. The toilets were out-houses set about one hundred feet back on either side of the school.

The school house was built during the summer of 1873 and cost a total of \$1,000. The units were raised by taxation with some money also being borrowed. Miss Addie Lewin was the first teacher in the new school. She received \$25.00/mo.



Wadsworth Depot

In the early years of the school there were about sixty-three children between the ages of six and twenty-one going to school. There were eight grades in the one room and sometimes the teacher taught several high school subjects. School was held during three months of the year, December, January, and February. During the winter months young and old gathered at school about twice a week and had "spelling bees." John Shea was the champion "spelver" of the county. (An 1892 Websters Primary Dictionary shows "spelt" as a synonym of "spell." The word "spelver" is not included, but, most probably means "speller.") As time went on the school year became longer and by 1900 school was in session eight months.

The teachers, aided by the children, did their own janitorial work. The children carried water to school by buckets from a nearby farm. A dipper for drinking was hung near the bucket. Carrying water was considered a privilege as the children who had that duty got time off from classes. A water bubbler was purchased in 1916 and the school directors hired a man to haul water to school.

By 1900 the school building was twenty-five years old and in need of some repairs. Mrs. George Cashmore, in an interview on her first impression of the school in which she was to teach, said that the floor had holes in it and the double desks were old and not fastened to the floor. The desks kept tipping over and disrupting the classroom until she screwed them to the floor herself. There were few library books and no dictionary. She had thirty-five students but the compulsory attendance law was not enforced and the children came only when their parents did not need them at home. School was held for eight months out of the year for which she received thirty-six dollars a month.



Wadsworth Depot

Although the teachers did their own janitorial work they began to be recognized for it by receiving extra pay for their efforts. The teachers salaries between 1900 and 1910 averaged forty-five dollars per months and it rose from fifty dollars a month to one hundred sixty dollars a month between 1910 and 1925. The average education of the teacher in this period (1900-1925) consisted of one or two years of high school work. All the teachers had to take and pass an examination from the state before receiving a teacher's certificate. This certificate had to be renewed yearly. As in the past, most of the teachers boarded with people in the school district where the cost of room and board ranged from two to five dollars per week.

From 1900-1925 the number of students averaged between twenty-five and thirty. In 1903 the School Board of Directors voted for a nine month school year and in 1904 a motion was made and carried at the annual school meeting for the truancy law to be enforced.

The teachers followed a "course of study" put out each year by the county superintendent's office. The subjects taught were reading, arithmetic, history, geography, physiology, grammar, civil government, and spelling. It was the policy at this time for parents to buy the texts used by their children.

The financial cost of running the school for the district between 1900 and 1910 averaged about five hundred dollars per year. Between 1910 and 1925 it rose in porportion to the teacher's salary, as the largest expense was the teacher's salary. Other expenses were fuel, school supplies and repairs, cleaning school, and insurance.

Up until the 1920's, the teachers were responsible for raising the extra money needed by the school for supplies, etc. They did this by having basket or box socials usually held at the Old Dance Hall in town. For basket socials, the young ladies in town would pack a meal for two in a gaily decorated basket. She also tucked her name inside the basket. The baskets were then auctioned off to the men who did not know whose meal and company they were to enjoy until they opened the basket. The bidding during these basket socials could get quite lively.

Repairs and improvements were made on the school building. A woodshed was built in 1902, and a new pine floor was installed in 1903. The following year the school had forty single desks. In 1914, a new larger space heater was installed. An addition which enclosed chemical toilets was built onto the back of the school in 1918. In the same year the board voted to purchase an acre and a half of land adjoining the school lot for the purpose of enlarging the playground. In 1920, at a cost of seven hundred fifty seven dollars, a well and pump were added to the equipment of the school. The school yard was fenced in on three sides in 1923 and the fence was completed across the front (along the road) in 1928. A hot lunch program began in the early part of the 1920's. One hot dish was served at noon.

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CLASS PICTURE OF WADSWORTH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM 1889



Pupils shown in above picture are:

Orrin Gongo, Wm. Rahling, Herb Strang, Fred Alcock, Fred Cashmore, Laura Devine Ray, Dollie Lux, John Lux, Frank McCrackin, Alice McCrackin, Mary Devine Bartlett, Addie Bartlett Shea, Addie Devine Gilmore, Carrie Rahling Trilby, Edith Sheur Schlosser, Onnie Shea Nemej, Gertrude O'Day, Florence O'Day, Mayme Moran, Marmie Gongo, Annie Madden Hogan, Leo Rahling, George Lux, Chas. Rahling, Ray Alcock, Geo. Cashmore, Frank Sheur, Eddie Lux, Sadie Gongo, Mabel Alcock Siver, Mabel Lux, Carrie Cashmore, Berdie Lux Sphonberg, Dora Schlosser.

Jennie French - Teacher

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All through this time students were very active in the community and school as shown by the following activity sheet recorded by the school children from 1917-1918. The activity sheet was copied exactly as the children wrote it.

School Activities of 1917-1918

The Wadsworth School first became active when the children purchased liberty bonds from the Second Liberty Loan, this was early in the school year.

Later on tags were sold in order to raise money for the Red Cross, for which we received a large Banner.

In Feb. a Basket Social was given which was very successful. After the expenses were paid the remainder was \$85.00.

The teachers and children became interested in the Thrift and War Saving stamps in December. A War Saving Society was formed in this school in January, nearly all the children joining.

A Junior auxiliary was formed in this school in January, about 17 of the children joining. They elected the following officers:

Laurello Shea	President
Elizabeth Gilles	Vice President
John Gilles	Secretary
Katherine Cashmore	Treasurer

Under these officers and our teacher Miss Renehan, acting as head of it over all, we did many small things for the Red Cross.

In the Red Cross drive week we saved our pennies instead of buying candy. At the end of the week we found we had \$3.00, which we turned over to the collector in this district.

More of the Wadsworth School children have bought bonds; there now being a total of six fifty dollar ones.

Edmund Bartlett	\$50.00
Laurello Shea	\$50.00
Margaret Lux	\$50.00
John Foster	\$50.00
Winifred Foster	\$100.00

are those who bought liberty bonds.

The children have bought Thrift Stamps and War Saving Stamps to the amount of \$100.00

We spoke with Elizabeth Gyzen, Jim Lahey, Margaret Lahey and Grace Shields (all of whom grew up in Wadsworth and remember very well this old frame school house) in regard to what they remember of Wadsworth and the Wadsworth School when they were growing up. Both Elizabeth and Jim attended the old frame school and remember that their first teacher was Susan Pettis (she taught from 1903-1905). They remember receiving a strong foundation in reading, writing and arithmetic. Spelling Bees were a large part of a child's education. Grace Shields recalls that there were also reading and arithmetic contests in which the good students from Wadsworth School had a chance to go as high as competing for best in the county in these subjects. Grace also remembers dictionary tests where students would look up a word as quickly as they could and then dash up to the blackboard to write down the definition of the chosen word. Whoever did this the quickest won the contest. They all remember that these contests were not only fun but also a wonderful way to reinforce what they had been taught. Grace Shields recalls that students who had perfect attendance during a certain period of time would be awarded with a half day off from school.

Elizabeth Gyzen remembers that you always walked to school, regardless of the weather - unless you were lucky enough to get a ride from one of the farmers heading out of town. Since Wadsworth was a railroad town, all four could remember the train stopping in town to pick up water and clean out the cinders. The farmers used these cinders for their driveways. The old milk train that passed through Wadsworth used to pick up the farmers milk cans at 9:00 a.m. and drop off the empty milk cans at 4:30 p.m.

It was this milk train that students who went on to high school used to take into Gurnee. Jim and Elizabeth both finished eight years of schooling and acknowledged that to go on to high school was an exception. Margaret Lahey did receive further schooling beyond the eight year country school program. Gurnee, at this point, did not have an official high school but at Gurnee grade school they did have a two year high school program. If a student from Wadsworth went onto a 4 year high school he had to board in whatever town the high school was located.



Wadsworth Main Street

All the farmers who brought their milk into town did their shopping in Wadsworth. Jim remembers that farmers bought about half their groceries with fresh eggs that they would bring from the farm. These fresh eggs were then shipped (along with the 50lb. wooden tubs filled with butter from the butter factory) to Chicago.

The railroad employed a large portion of the working men in Wadsworth. These men generally worked as section hands -they were called this because they were responsible for particular "sections" of the track. The second main track in Wadsworth was completed in 1893. A lot of the local men were killed either while building the tracks or maintaining them. Many families in Wadsworth lost fathers, grandfathers or sons while they were working on the railroad tracks.

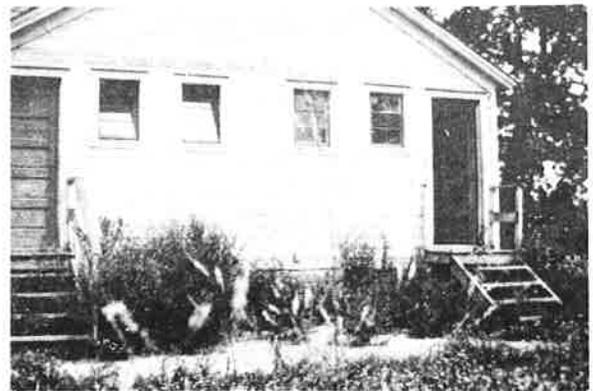
Perhaps the strongest memory that all four people we talked to (Jim, Margaret, Elizabeth and Grace) had was that growing up in Wadsworth in the early part of the nineteenth century was fun. There was a sense of adventure and excitement plus that feeling of comradery that one can only seem to achieve in a small town.



Oct. 1923 - School children from Wadsworth School - are any of these faces familiar.



Wadsworth School in 1917.



Rear view of Wadsworth School taken in about 1924.

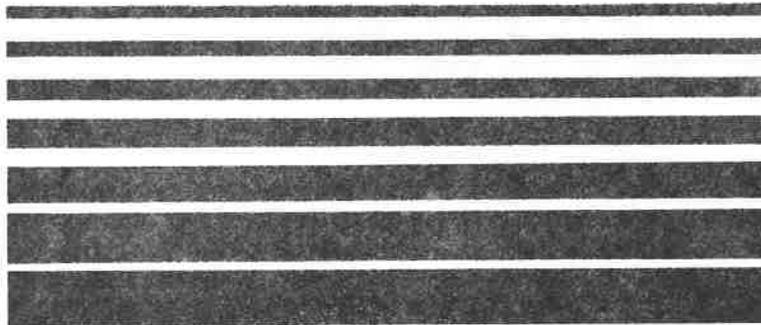


WADSWORTH SCHOOL (1910)- L/ R, Back Row: Katherine Dooper, Elizabeth Schlosser, Clara Lux, Teacher Nellie De Lany, Arthur Lux, Arthur Porter, James Lahey, Margaret Schlosser, Walter Lahey, Pearl Porter. Front: Loretta Lux, Glenora Cashmore, Bessie Cudahy, Robert Lux, Lucille Lahey, Lillian Young, Tessie Cudahy, Henry Dooper, Leslie Shields, Dick Dooper, Earl Shields, Robert Curry, Gertrude Young.

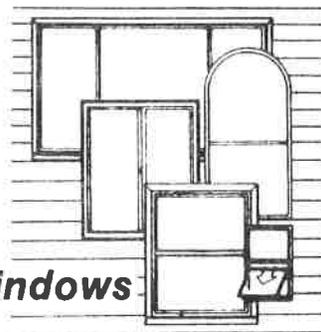
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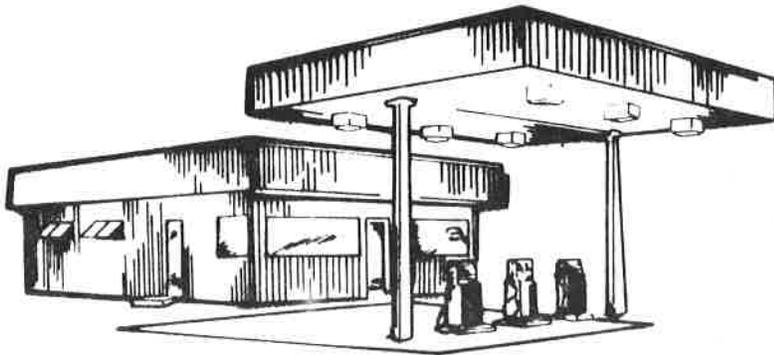
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1925 TO PRESENT

The year 1925 started a new and very important period in the life of the Wadsworth School. On June 6, 1925, a meeting was held in the school house for the purpose of discussing the advisability of erecting a new school house. Two weeks later, on June 20, a special election was held in School District #7. Thirty-four members of the district registered to vote on five issues. These issues were as follows: to build a new school, to issue bonds in the amount of eighty-five hundred dollars for the purpose of building the school, to increase the tax levy of the district from 2% to not more than 3% for educational purposes and from 3/4% to not more than 1% for building purposes, to authorize the school board to purchase a school house site, and to locate the new school at the present site. All except one of the issues passed by a large majority. Authorization of the school board to purchase a school house site failed to pass.

Several bids were made for the construction job. It was awarded to Charles Cashmore who built the school at a cost of about eleven thousand dollars. It is this brick school that Charles Cashmore built that is being dedicated as the Wadsworth Village Hall.

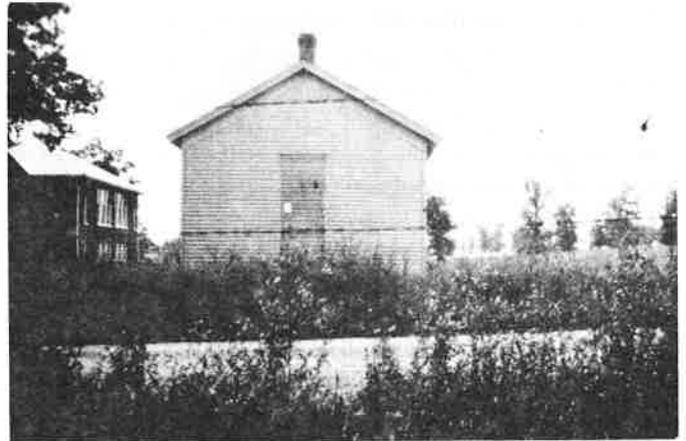
New equipment and twenty-five new desks were placed in the new building. The children moved in after Christmas vacation of the school year 1925-6:

Rose Thorson was the first teacher in the new school and she taught there until 1929. Rose Thorson, besides being the first teacher in the new building, was the first normal school graduate hired in the district. The directors of the Wadsworth School received a letter, dated June 4, 1928, from Mr. Simpson, County Superintendent of Schools, in which he quoted from a letter from Mrs. Messinger, who had previously visited the school. "We were especially delighted with the work of Miss Rose Thorson at the Wadsworth School. The fact that Miss Thorson had found ways and means of doing a thoroughly up-to-date piece of work in a one room school, made us feel that she was unique among rural teachers. I am willing to say that I have never seen a better rural school."

During the 1920's the basket socials ended and the PTA began. The school board furnished the library books and more of the school supplies, thus eliminating some of the teacher's responsibility for making money. The town was proud of its new school and continued to try to improve the building grounds and school programs.



The new brick school in 1925 with some of the old out buildings from the old school.



The old grade school with the new brick school behind it. This was taken in 1925 before the old frame school was torn down.



Miss Rose Thorson who was the first teacher in the new school. She taught from 1925-1929.



Wadsworth School 1925

In 1927 the school was wired for electricity and in the same year a flag pole was put up on the school grounds. Fire extinguishers were purchased in 1929 and some playground equipment, a ten foot pull away, was installed.

The school board, in 1930, voted to improve the school grounds and three hundred dollars was paid to the Waukegan Nursery for the planting of trees and shrubbery. In 1931 screens were put on the windows to conclude the improvements of the new school and the grounds.

Mr. Petty, County Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Watts, Assistant County Superintendent of Schools, sent a letter on December 6, 1931, to the directors of the Wadsworth School Board stating that the Wadsworth School was designated "Superior School" by the Department of Public Instruction of the state of Illinois.

The cost of running the school had risen to a little over three thousand dollars a year by 1931.

Most of the teachers in the period between 1925-40 were normal school graduates. The salaries averaged one hundred fifty dollars per month, none of them varying much from the average.

The mid to late 1920's saw big changes once again in the town of Wadsworth. The economy of the town was changing. The Railroad which had comprised much of the welfare and activity of the town was not making as many stops in Wadsworth. Jim and Margaret Lahey, Elizabeth Gyzen, and her daughter Lois Walden, were able to help chronicle how the changes in the railroad impacted on a small town like Wadsworth.

When the railroad switched from steam to diesel it no longer had to stop as often at the various towns on its run in order to pick up water. Wadsworth was one of the stops that the railroad started to eliminate. Soon, the milk train ceased to exist and the farmers started to sell their milk direct to the big commercial dairies. With the farmers not needing to use the "milk train" as a delivery source for their milk, many of their trips into Wadsworth were eliminated and therefore much of their shopping in Wadsworth.

In addition to this, many of the original storekeepers were getting older and running a store was becoming difficult for them. Lois Walden can remember when she was young, back in the 1920's and 1930's, Heydecker's store was already empty. She can vividly recall seeing the remnants of hobo's who had

hopped off the train in Wadsworth, spent the night in the old store, and then went on their way the next day.

The advent of the automobile also changed things for Wadsworth (and all of America for that matter). People could get out and about more. Children, who once were expected to remain on the farm or help out at their parents store when they grew up, were getting exposure to many different lifestyles. As was the trend, alot of local children chose to move away when they came of age. Also the automobile made people more selective as to where they chose to shop. Because the train stopped in a particular town did not mean that people flocked to that town to shop, deliver supplies, etc.

So it was that much of the industry in Wadsworth began to wane - the brick and tile factories closed as did the butter factory. The local blacksmith was usurped by the automobile and alot of the old stores closed down. This trend was aggravated even more by and during the depression. Work was hard to find anywhere. People took jobs where they could find them. The small towns were having a hard time keeping their own people in jobs and the automobile made the people able to provide their own transportation out of town to find jobs they so desperately needed.

By the mid to late 1930's the trains were not stopping at all in Wadsworth. Mail was picked up off the mail hook at the station while the train was still moving. Wadsworth's main claim - that is, being one of only two towns in Newport township where the train stopped, thereby providing supplies, transportation and mail to the local population - ceased to exist.

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1935 - Mrs. Himens



Front Row - Tony Kisonis - Bob Carnakan - Dick Balmes - Leslie McClure

Row 2 - June Shea, Violet Voight, Shirley Fox, Rose Shea, Fox, Geraldine Whitbrod, Shirley Voight, Gail Carnakan

Row 3 - Fred Balmes, Doris Cashmore, Eleanor Lux, Laverne Whitbrod, Lois Gyzen, Dorothy Doyle, Therese Balmes, Agnes Balmes, Howard Felbinger

Top Row - Mark Balmes, Floyd Cashmore, Henry Ford, George Ford, Harold Voight, Paul Fox, Leslie Ford, Eugene Shea, Billy Fox

1938-1939 - Mrs. Himens



Front Row (L to R) - Rose Shea, Bernard Kelly, Joyce Gyzen, Jim Ford, Betty Howard, Marion Obenauf, Violet Medlin, Mary Ann Balmes, Dick Balmes, Marie Howard

Row 2 - Bob Howard, Floyd Cashmore, Tony Kisonis, Norman Obenauf, Don Daywalt, Richard Obenauf, Stuart Blaw, Leslie Ford, Agnes Balmes

Row 3 - Dorothy Doyle, Theresa Balmes, Mrs. Himens (T), George Ford, Jim Hoult, Lois Gyzen

All of these changes in Wadsworth through the 1920's and 1930's had a definite impact on the well being of the Wadsworth School. The increasing school enrollment and the low assessed valuation of the district was of great concern to the members of the school board during the period 1940-1960. Beginning in the year 1942 there seemed to be a great influx of students. That year Virginia Wertz reported a total of thirty-eight students with ten of them in first grade. This trend continued for the next two years until the school could no longer hold any more students. In the year 1944, bus service was provided to transport the Catholic children in the area to a parochial school in Waukegan. This took some of the pressure off the overcrowded school.

The Christmas program continued to be a highlight of the school year. The PTA sponsored card parties and for a short time dances were held at the school until someone decided the school house was not built for dances. The curriculum consisted of reading, arithmetic, spelling, history, geography, civics, health, grammar, and science. All eight grades were still included in the school but it was crowded because enrollment kept increasing. In the early 1940's a special music teacher was hired to teach music once a week.

Aloha Conner in her 1954-5 annual teacher's report listed fifty students (one tuition student from Townline School) in the Wadsworth School. Townline School, in the same year, reported thirty-nine students (twenty-six tuition students from Wadsworth School). By 1955 the financial pressure (assessed valuation did not go up but expenses did) in both the Townline and Wadsworth School districts forced the board members to vote to consolidate School Districts #7 and #8. The consolidation was approved by a hearing of the Lake County Board of School Trustees in April 1955. The district became the Wadsworth Community Consolidated District #7.

After the consolidation of the two schools, grades one through four were taught at Townline School and grades five through eight in the Wadsworth School. A janitor was hired to take care of both schools. The hot lunch program was continued at both schools but just during the winter months. The children paid twenty cents a meal. The Federal funds did not cover the cost of the hot lunch program and the extra money was earned by the PTA through card parties. When this proved inadequate, the hot lunch program was dropped in 1958. It had lasted over thirty years.

In the early 1950's part of the Townline School District wished to be annexed to Gurnee District #56. The people felt that the Gurnee Grade School could furnish better educational facilities for their children. This area was detached from District #8 and annexed to District #56 at the same time that Districts #7 and #8 were consolidated. Their action caused the Wadsworth School Board to be concerned about the educational facilities offered to the children, yet their detachment from the district relieved the problem for the time. In 1956 the Catholic Church opened a school in Wadsworth. This again relieved the pressure caused by increasing enrollments.

Between 1940 and 1955 the teachers' salaries rose from one hundred ten to three hundred dollars per month; and by 1963 the salaries were five hundred dollars per month (nine month school year).

The increasing enrollment through the years made the school board members ever mindful of the need that something must be done to improve the education facilities of the district. The State Department of Public Instruction was also demanding that the school board provide better school facilities. The state placed the school on probation in 1960 due to what they called an inadequate academic program. In addition to this the fire inspector revealed deficiencies at the Wadsworth School.



Wadsworth School activities outside on the playground.



1930's Wadsworth School picnic.



Wadsworth School

Wadsworth School - year unknown



Wadsworth School - 1952-53

Grades 5-8

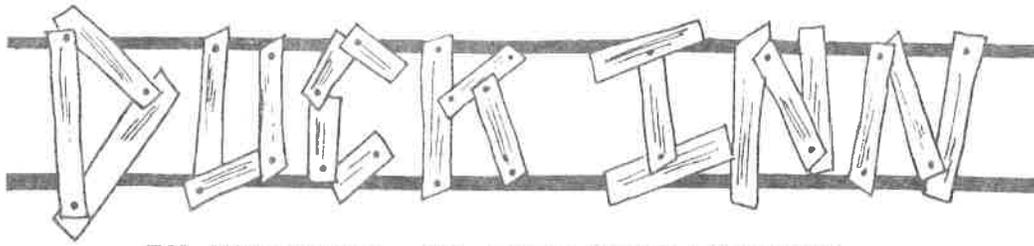


starting first bottom row, left to right

1. Carol Worth, _____, Daryl Colboth, Sandy Bartlett, _____, Mary Cashmore, Diane Ruff, Walter Becker, Linda Ames, Nick Iwanski, Carol Sheskie.

2. Karon Sheskie, _____, Kenyon Graham, Barbara Wicklund, Janice Reinkie, Donnie Ruff, Margaret Adams, Barbara Worth, Gaylord Strahan, Connie Chisholm, Dell Luise Shuber, Mrs. Osborne.

3. Edith Kaiser, Sandra Sheskie, Kenneth Cashmore, Sylvia Swazas, _____, _____, Jim Brown, Roy Becker, Joy Bensing, John Adam, Joyce Cashmore.



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The rising cost of school maintenance, the rising teachers salaries, plus the additional expense of another classroom and a district of low assessed valuation brought the realization to some members of the school board that a building program was unfeasible. They felt that it would be impossible to maintain a large enough new school building.

The next alternative the School Board examined was annexation of the Wadsworth School District with another district. Millburn School board was approached in regard to this but they were uninterested. Newport School was also considered. The board felt that Wadsworth would be best served by annexing with Gurnee District #56. So it was that in 1963 the school board voted to annex to Gurnee Dist. #56. The Lake County Board of School Trustees approved the annexation. Some of the people of the district petitioned the Circuit Court to have the decision for annexation changed but Judge Moran upheld the decision allowing annexation.

The decision was appealed to the Appellate Court which also upheld the annexation. In September 1963 the Wadsworth School closed its doors and District #7 was dissolved after over a century of service to the children of the community.

Once Wadsworth School closed it was never used as a school by Gurnee. For a period of time it was rented out and then stood empty for a couple of years.

On Jan. 12, 1984, Joyce Shelley who was then Wadsworth Planning Commission chairman succeeded in her efforts to interest the village board in pursuing the purchase of the school property. Mayor Tomkowiak gave authorization to investigate this possibility. Petitions were circulated which showed the town favored the acquisition. So it is, that this building which once served the community as a school will once again serve Wadsworth as village hall and community center.



Wadsworth School just prior to renovation.

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THE TEACHERS

We thought it would be fun to contact some teachers who had taught at Wadsworth School and discuss their teaching experiences. We were able to locate Virginia Wertz Balmes who taught for 2 full school years at Wadsworth in 1941-1943 and Evelyn Strahan who taught at Townline School (before it consolidated with Wadsworth) in the early 1950's. Both Evelyn Strahan and Virginia Balmes also taught at public schools where there was one teacher per grade level.

Perhaps the most prominent memory for Mrs. Strahan and Mrs. Balmes is how busy they were as the teacher in a one room country school. Since there was only one teacher that teacher had to oversee everything going on - recess, lunch, all of the eight classes, etc. A teacher had to be very organized. For example, if they were working on reading with the first and second graders they also had to have planned for what activities the other six grades were to be doing. The teachers took advantage of older children's free time by having the older kids drill the younger children on their lessons.

While both Mrs. Balmes and Mrs. Strahan felt it was easier for the teacher to teach just one grade per school year, they also felt there were distinct advantages to the old one room country schools. In the one room schools, a teacher was not inclined to "pass along" to the next grade a child who presented a problem. They dealt with the problem right away because they knew they would receive as a student, the same child with the same problem the following year. Also, by virtue of all eight grades being taught in the same room, a student who was a bit unsure of a lesson learned from the previous year could listen in on this same lesson being taught the next year. This was an excellent form of reviewing or reinforcing what students learned from previous years. Both teachers felt that this was perhaps a way that children nowadays were hindered. Schools are very segregated now - not racially, but age-wise. First graders are always with first graders, good readers are grouped together with good readers and so on. A child's chance for a natural review of previous material learned is therefore missing from present schools. Children in modern public schools also don't get to learn as much from exposure to the older children's behavior and lessons.

New Teacher At Wadsworth



Miss Virginia Wirtz

By DOROTHY DOYLE

Rural life is not a novelty to Miss Virginia Wirtz, a new teacher at the Wadsworth Grade school. Miss Wirtz was raised on a farm near Mundelein. She graduated from the Swan Grade school at Grayslake and the Waukegan Township High school.

Following this Miss Wirtz attended the Northern Illinois State Teacher's college for three years.

Wadsworth school is her first teaching position and from the first day of school, Miss Wirtz has been very happy and pleased when working with the children.

Newspaper clipping from 1941 when Virginia Wirtz Balmes was hired.



Evelyn Strahan when she taught at Townline School.

Both teachers felt that reading was very important. They never varied their reading programs for they felt if a child could read he could do anything. They also did a lot of memorization work with the kids. The children were required to memorize poems, plays and all sorts of different written material.

As in the past, the teachers received a course of study from the superintendent that they were required to follow. However the teachers could be as creative as they wanted in regards to how they taught the course of study.

Both Virginia Balmes and Evelyn Strahan have fond memories of their time spent teaching in the old one room schools. There was much to recommend some of the old methods of schooling even though they may not be particularly feasible in today's schools.

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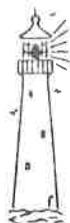
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WADSWORTH SCHOOL — 1953



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2. Joyce Cashmore, Walter Becher, Donnie Ruff, Linda Ames, Gaylord Strahan, Chuck Dieringer, Sandra Sheskie.

3. _____, Carol Sheskie, Dell Luise Schuber, Mary Bartlett, Barbara Olerenshow, _____, Connie Chisholm, Diane Ruff, Sandra Bartlett, Carol Worth, Mrs. Osborne.

4. K. Graham, Barbara Worth, Karen Sheskie, Sylvia Swazas, Janice Reinkie, Margaret Adams, Sandy Muller, Kenyon.

TOWNLINE SCHOOL — 1953



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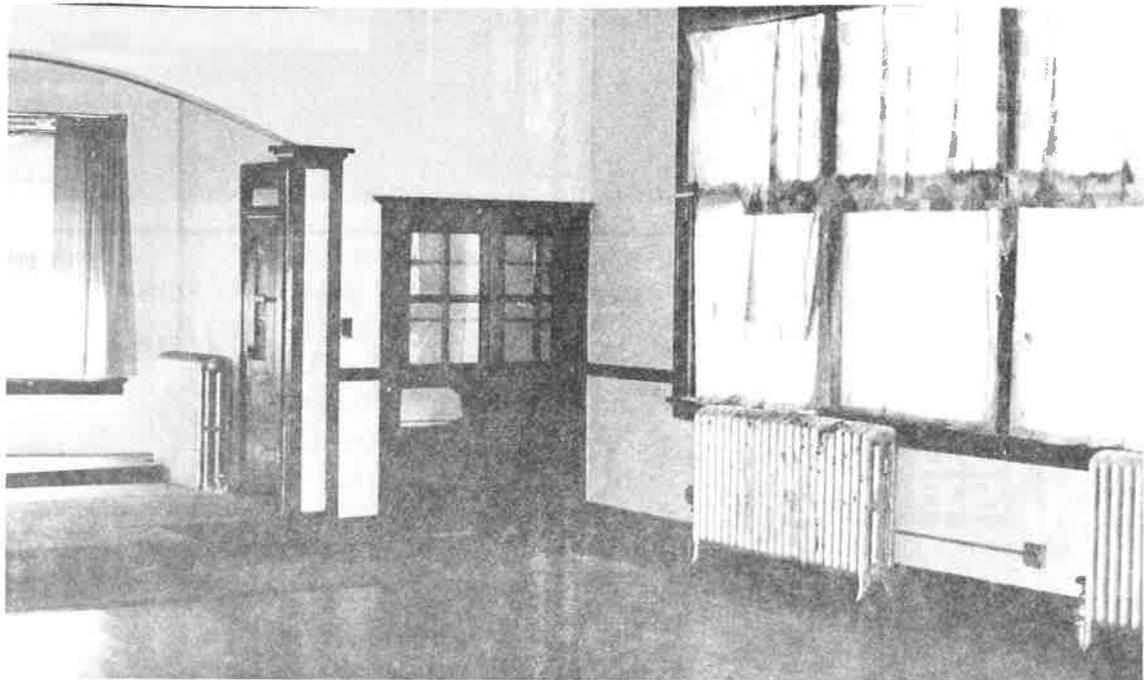
2035 GALILEE, ZION, ILLINOIS 60099

WADSWORTH SCHOOL

The following pictures show the condition of the school before renovation by the town of Wadsworth.



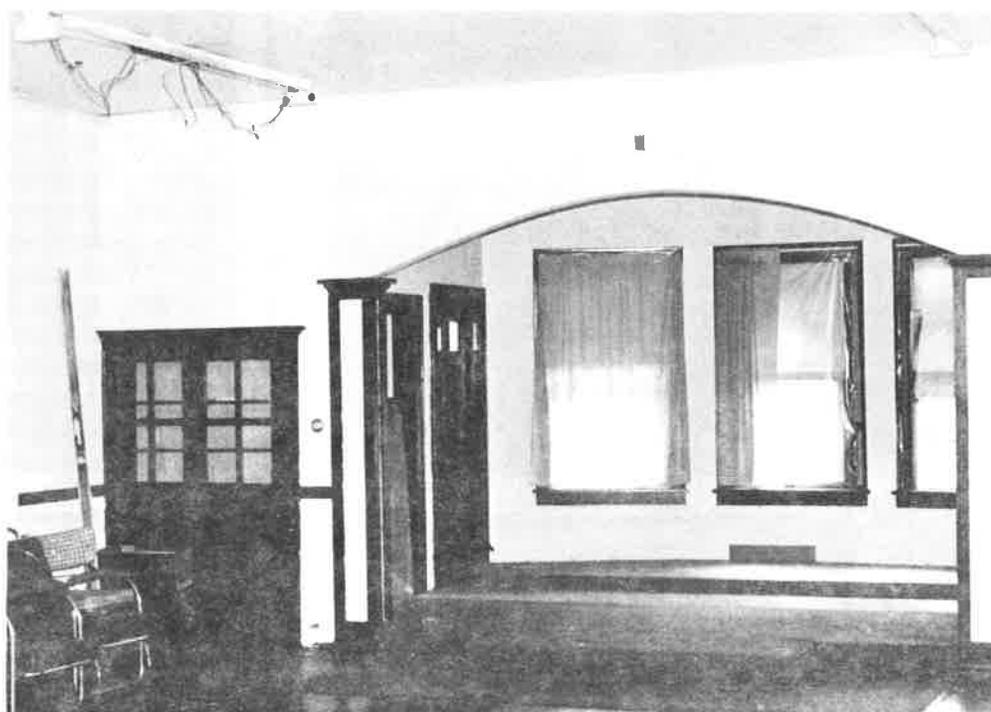
The school with the old oak tree before the tree was cut down.



Interior of the main room of the school.



Exterior of Wadsworth School showing cornerstone and brick extension to original entry way (which has since been removed).



Another shot of the interior of the school showing condition of school prior to renovation.

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Special thanks is given to all the people who shared their memories of the school and town with us, and to Mary Ann Gilray for the use of her research on the history of Wadsworth School.

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