

Gilmanton High School
100
Years 1911-12 ~ 2011-12

1911-1922 History of the Gilmanton High School

Written by Morris Thompson, GHS Alumnus, in 1922
Historical pictures added in 2012

When Mr. Houser of Mondovi was in political life it was suggested to him by the state officers of public instruction at Madison that Gilmanton would be an ideal location for a township high school, and that the community should have one. The advantages of such a high school and how to secure one were explained to him at Madison for him in turn to explain to the people of Gilmanton. Not long after, Mr. Houser notified some of the people of Gilmanton interested in education that he had something to talk to them about, and wanted them to meet him at the hotel. At this meeting a number of our interested citizens were given the first idea of a township high school for Gilmanton and much interest and enthusiasm was aroused. It was explained to them how these high schools were given a very liberal state aid, and how the burden would be but little more than paying tuition to outside schools. To overbalancing this, would be the advantage to the community of every boy and girl having the chance to get a high school education which would not be possible if they must attend a school away from home. Mr. Ray Loomis became a very enthusiastic booster for a high school for Gilmanton and secured the necessary number of signatures, petitioning the Town Board to call a special election to vote upon the question, "Shall Gilmanton have a High School?"

Mr. Loomis presented the petition to Mr. G. Davie, then Chairman of the Town of Gilmanton, and the town board officially called a special meeting of the voters of the town. On the day of the special meeting Mr. Larson, Township High School Inspector, spoke both in the forenoon, and the afternoon on the advantages of a Township High School for Gilmanton, how to organize one, and about the liberal state aid being appropriated for such schools. After his afternoon talk the question was voted upon and carried by a big majority. This memorable date in 1911 shall ever be remembered as the official birth of our now well established Gilmanton High School. At the same meeting, and immediately after the carry

of the vote to have a high school, the first school board was elected as follows: Nic Hanseman, Pres., Ray Loomis, Sec., E.A. Kenyon, Treas. As there was but a short time left during that summer before September, immediate action on the part of the Board of Education was very necessary, and they started at once on the big task before them.

Acting upon High School Inspector Larson's recommendation of Mr. A. S. Wells for the principalship of our new high school the board awarded the first principal's contract to Mr. Wells, who came here soon after to take up his duties. Even though the voters voted for a high school, there still remained another requirement to be met before a high school was assured, and that was the enrolling of twenty-five students or more. Consequently, Mr. Well's first work was to interest as many students as possible; and he with Mr. Loomis canvassed the territory tributary to Gilmanton and interviewed all students eligible for entrance into the high school, secured the necessary number and satisfied that requirement by the state. Miss Mabel Bahr was secured as Mr. Wells' assistant to teach English and History.



The two-story brick graded school building site is the present location of Gilmanton Elementary at the junction of County Road Z and State Road 88. This building was built in 1909, but burned to the ground in 1952.

"Where to house the newly organized high school?" was the next question, but thanks to the help of District No. 1, one large room and two small rooms were rented on the second floor of the present graded school building at a very nominal charge. The beginning of school saw hardly enough chairs and seats to seat the students. And it was not until later that fall when the first laboratory equipment, supplies, and books for the library were received, so we can well realize that the students having the honor of being the first to attend Gilmanton High did not have the excellent facilities we have enjoyed this year. Fred Litchfield and LaVerne Forrest who completed the first three years of their high school course at Mondovi were the first seniors, and were the first two

students to graduate. The next year found Mr. Wells back as principal, but his assistant Miss Bahr had decided to share Mr. Well's home duties instead of his school duties so came back to us next September as Mrs. Wells.

Her position in our History and English department was filled by Miss Carrie Peckham. Mr. Wells not being athletically inclined, we do not find our Alma Mater being represented in any athletics during his stay; but we shall ever remember of Mr. Wells as the first principal of the Gilmanton High School; a very capable man, and very well liked. His hobby was electricity, and in our Physics laboratory can still be found a few parts of some electrical instruments he made. Today he is connected with the Julius Andres Electrical Co. of Milwaukee.

William Gluesing, now a junior in the College of Engineering of our State University at Madison was the only graduate that year.

Following Mr. Wells, we have Mr. Carl Robinson, who came to us from La Crosse Normal. He was assisted by Miss Sigrid Esbenson whose home was then at Osseo. Nothing unusual happened that year and we find that again the Gilmanton High School Senior Class had a class roll of but one, the graduating honor going to Blanche LaDuke, now Mrs. Luhrsen of this village.

For the next year 1914-15 the personnel of the school board was Nic Hanseman Pres., P.J. Hutchinson, Sec., and Christ Gluesing, Treas. The first three years of the new school just completed showed steady growth, and a demand for a Domestic Science Course. The establishment of a full Domestic Science Course for the girls to offset the Agricultural Course for the boys began a new epoch in its history. A third teacher was added to the force because of the adding of the new course, and we find Mr. Robinson, Prin., Miss Golden Ward, English and History, and Miss Gladys Ward, Domestic Science, guided the students that year in their search for knowledge. The first Gilmanton High School boys' basketball team was organized that year and had among its players, Henry Gunderson, George Larson, Jason Cody, Irvin Brinkman, and Edward Gluesing. Though the team was not as successful as some of our later teams, to them belongs the honor of being our first athletes. Consistent with the growth of our enrollment the number of graduates increased, and we find Geo. Larson, Ruby Sund, Lelia Loomis, Helen Loomis, Vivian Clark, and Lucille Loomis, seven in all graduating that beautiful day in June 1915.

After two years as principal, Mr. Robinson decided to change schools and went to Tripoli as principal. To



1916-17 Girls Basketball Team

fulfill his place, the Board of Education secured Mr. Williams of River Normal as principal, who with Golden and Gladys Ward here for their second year constituted the faculty for the school year 1915-1916. The school competed in basketball of this year having both a boys' and girls' team. The girls' team under Miss Gladys Ward's coaching; Florence Noble, Josephine Engler, Olivia Glanzman, Edna Farner, and Alma Glanzman made a very good record winning all of their games. Commencement Day found the following six seniors receiving their diplomas: Hendry Gunderson, Edward Gluesing, Edna Farner, Olivia Glanzman, Alma Glanzman and Josephine Engler.



Wallace J. Landry, Principal

Mr. C. D. Loomis and Mr. L. A. Larson were elected to Mr. Gluesing and Mr. Hutchinson's places on the board. An entirely new faculty was secured to begin school anew. Wallace J. Landry, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin was our new principal, and was assisted by Miss Ethel Whitmore, graduate of Lawrence College for English and History, and Miss Gladys Condie from Stout Institute for Domestic Science. During his university career, Mr. Landry held places on the different athletic teams and brought to us a new life in basketball. His first year here found our boys winning half of their games, and much interest created. That year Hilda Schultz was the only graduate.



1917-18 Boys Basketball Team

For the school year 1917-18, only Mr. Landry returned, and the assistant positions were filled by Miss Esther Hayter from Lawrence College, and Miss Lillian McDermott from Stout Institute. That year shall be remembered as the first year of having a strong basketball team which was selected as one of the teams to compete at the Eau Claire Tournament. In March of that year Mr. Landry left to enter the army and Miss Hayter and Miss McDermott finished the year with half day sessions. The largest class in the history of the Gilmanston High School graduated that year, fifteen in all: Alice and Hattie Gluesing, Edwin and Alice Fluke, Cecelia Lubinsky, Cora Larson, Mabel Deetz, Ezra Hutchinson, Ann Loomis, Alma Kaste, Agnes Loomis, Orlando Clark, Arthur Farner, Iva Loomis and Mildred Lunderville.

The year of 1919-20 found the faculty the same except that Miss Cora Bietling held the principalship. The flu interrupted the school so often that no outside activities such as basketball or class play were given that year. Florence Ruf was our only graduate.

When school opened in September 1919 Mr. Landry was with us again, and was assisted by Miss Esther Boergkamp of Lawrence College, and Miss Katherine Jansen of Stout Institute.

A new state requirement made it necessary to carry on our agricultural course during eleven months. To comply with the state requirement and uphold the standard of our school, our agricultural course was extended over the summer months of June and July, and has since continued so. Again our basketball teams were very successful and competed at the Eau Claire Tournament. George Gunderson, Bertha Davis, Edgar Goodermote, Dennison Loomis, Henry Scholdtfeldt, Jason Cody and Ellsworth Ramsey graduated May 27 as the class of 1920. The enrollment increased so much that there was very little available space in the crowded rooms of the graded school building and Prin. Landry began his campaign for a new building. He kept the question before the people by newspaper articles, and gradually interested more and more of the people of this town.

On June 28, 1920 at the regular annual meeting it was voted by a 30 to 7 vote to purchase a site and build a new high school building. Mr. Hanseman, Pres. Of the Board of Education was not a candidate for re-election, and his place was filled by Mr. Frank Deetz, who is still in office. But few school buildings have been built without some opposition, and ours was no exception to the rule. An injunction was taken out opposing the building of a new high school. But the question was finally settled by a special meeting on Sept. 16, 1920, which resulted in a 217 to 113 vote to not rescind the vote to build. A building committee consisting of the school board, Mr. B.U. Ayres, and Mr. B. B. Phillips immediately took up the new task. Mr. J. Hancock of Eau Claire was the architect, and Mr. Simmons of Mpls., the contractor. Building operations were begun early in April of the next spring, and 1920-21 marked the last and tenth year in the crowded rooms of the graded school.

During the last year in the first home of the Gilmanston High School, Mr. Landry was assisted by Miss Ruth Jegi of the La Crosse Normal, and Miss Amelia Hankel of Stout Institute. A little after the beginning of school, Mr. Larson, Treas. of the board resigned on account of expecting to spend the winter in the

west, and his place was filled by Mr. W.H. Gumbert, who is the present treasurer. Again our basketball teams were very successful, the boys' team being exceptionally strong, winning 14 out of 15 games. This year marked our first real competition in stock judging and our team on Dec. 10, 1920 won first over Mondovi and Durand: and took fourth in the state contest in Madison on Feb. 5, 1921. On June 3, 1921 Fredrick Sund, William Sund, Lewis Brinkman, Ruth Loomis, Wilma Farner Walter Farner, Wilman Henseman, Elaine Jost, Elfreda Bielfeldt, Loris Bielfeldt, and Carl Larson graduated as the last class from the graded school building, making the total number from that building 53.



The summer of 1921 was a memorable one for it shall always be remembered as the summer when our present grand building was built. The opening week of school last fall was spent in the graded school building and on Monday, Sept. 19, 1921 all high school students experienced the great and glorious feeling of reporting for the first time in their grand new home just completed. The class of 1925 enjoys the distinction of being the first freshman class, and we, the class of 1922, have the honorable distinction of being the first senior class to

graduate from our new home. Miss Sylvia Gnewikow of the University of Wis. And Miss Esther Scheurle of Stout Institute have very ably assisted Prin. Landry during the past year. Our gymnasium was opened to the public with a double victory over the Nelson High School teams on Nov., 4, 1921, and has been a very popular part of our building. Again our stock judging team was victorious over the Mondovi, Cochrane, Arkansaw and Durand High School teams, represented this district at Madison on March 17th. Deeds have made history since the beginning of time, and it is by the actual deeds that our school has been making history which we shall ever be proud of and which is making it favorably known to more and more people each year. So from a school with little more than its name and twenty five students eleven years ago the Gilman High School has reached the high achievement of being one of the strongest high schools in the county, and having one of the most modern and well equipped building in this part of the state, for which very much credit is due to the tax payers of this town.

Including the seven graduates, Leland Forrest, Olive Hanseman, Gladys Hutchinson, Marguerite Britten, Lettie Smith, Josephine Iverson, and Morris Thompson of the present graduating class 59 have graduated, 35 girls and 24 boys; and it shall ever be our ambition to continue making history for the Gilman High School that you, I, and all others interested in its welfare, growth, achievement and benefits to the community, state, and nation may well feel justly proud of.

(Original document was typed for Morris Thompson by Mrs. Danford Loomis, who worked with her husband in the Gilman Bank. It was possibly the only typewriter in Gilman at the time.)