

PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SEPTEMBER OPEN HOUSE

On Sunday, September 16th at 2:00 - 5:00 p.m., the **Plymouth Historical Society** will have an **OPEN HOUSE**.

- Entertainment will be provided by "*The Whistler*", Robert F. Larson at 2:30 and 4:00. He is a very entertaining balladeer, whistler, yodeler and plays the autoharp.
- Plymouth's First Fire Truck will be on display. This Fire Truck now belongs to the Plymouth Historical Society for the purpose of preserving a part of Plymouth's history.
- A 1925 Model "T" truck will be on display. This truck was originally used on Henry Schiebe's farm and is still in the family.
- Refreshments will be served.

OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS IN PLYMOUTH

It's not too early to plan ahead and mark your calendar for the **Fourth Annual "Old Fashioned Christmas in Plymouth" Sunday, December 9th**, co-sponsored by the Plymouth Historical Society and Plymouth Park Recreation Department. It will be bigger and better than last year, so watch for future announcements.

MAILING AND MEMBERSHIP LIST

All of the people who have previously signed our guest book have been added to the mailing list. You will have to pardon us if we didn't get your name or address exactly correct. If you have any additions or corrections, please call Gary Schiebe at 473-4889.

If anyone would like to become a member of the Plymouth Historical Society, please complete the attached membership form or feel free to call Jack or Mary Malmstedt at 473-4493. The annual dues are Individual \$5.00, Family \$7.50 and Lifetime \$100.00.

PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The Plymouth Historical Building and Carriage House has been repainted. The flower garden has been moved and reconstructed with new sod added to the lawn. An expanded area has also been paved in front of the Carriage House. This was all courtesy of the City of Plymouth and the Park and Recreation Departments. A big thanks to their people!

PHIL ECKES

100 YEARS YOUNG

Phil Eckes celebrated his 100th birthday earlier this year. He was born February 15, 1890 to a family with 10 brothers and sisters. The Eckes family farm was located on the site now occupied by Carlson Companies World Headquarters. Phil lived in Plymouth all his life and was very active in the community of Plymouth (civic affairs). He served on the town board for many years and earned a living as a farmer and a truck gardener raising vegetables. He's been a life-long member of Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Medina.

These are a few of the things that Phil remembered about the "Good Old Days".

It was 1904, when he was 14 years old, that he saw an automobile for the first time. All road maintenance was done with men, horses and hand tools. This included the hauling of gravel and snow removal by horses and big, wooden-V plows.

The only place you could buy things in those days was at County Road 73 and the service road of what is now Highway 55. That was the halfway point for farmers to stop before heading into Minneapolis. They'd pull their team of horses up to Schiebe's Corner and head to Minneapolis the next day. You couldn't make it in one day. A good team of horses could go three to four miles an hour. If you want to appreciate that, start out and walk a pretty brisk pace for an hour.

In those days, the family home was heated with wood which was cut by hand and piled in the wood box near the stove. At night, they used kerosene lamps to light the home.

Most of the food was raised on the family farm. Phil can remember churning butter, rendering lard, making sauerkraut in a 55 gallon barrel, canning vegetables and fruit from the garden and preserving pork by soaking it in a brine solution before hanging it to dry in the smoke house. His mother baked once a week. Seldom did the family buy a loaf of bread.

The family income was small. Farm products were sold in exchange for clothing, sugar, extracts and spices that could not be produced at home. Food for the family and livestock was stored in adequate quantities to last until the next year's crop was available. Family food supplies were canned and kept in the cellar which was usually under the house (built below the frost line to protect the perishables).

BEACON HEIGHTS SCHOOL

Minnesota was admitted to the Union in 1858, Plymouth was given its charter in 1858, and held its first town board meeting on April 19, 1858 at the home of Francis Day when its first officers were elected. These advances in progress by the pioneer residents created the need for schools, churches and a town hall.

Plymouth's first school house was called District 95. This number identified the historic school from 1858 until 1946 when it was consolidated with Wayzata and the identity changed from District 95 to Beacon Heights. The name "Beacon" seemed appropriate because of the nearby location of one in a series of Beacon lights which were used to guide air planes to the Minneapolis (Wold Chamberlain) airport. "Heights" also seemed appropriate because the Beacon light tower located nearby was situated on a hill which has the highest elevation in the area. "Beacon Hill", as it was called, is in the area of the present Plymouth Fire Station #1 and the NWB Telephone Microwave Radar Tower on County Road 6 and provided an opportunity to read the time on the Court House clock in Minneapolis (on a clear day).

District 95 started with a log building located about two blocks northeast of the present Beach Heights building. The log school was 14 to 16 feet square and housed 26 students who were taught the three R's by Miss Lorinda Shaw. Miss Shaw's salary was \$28 per month and the value of the building and land was set at \$200. This school offered instruction for the full elementary structure of Grades 1 through 8 and the students ranged in age from 5 to 19 years.

Our records do not include information about who built the log school, but they do tell us that supplies and furniture were scarce and primitive. The seats were wooden benches and the text books were limited to the bare essentials. There was no well and drinking water was carried from home. The students walked to school from their homes as far away as three miles. Some of the early family names include Bofferding, Cavanagh, Ernst, Taber, Glassing, Ryan, Shreks, Smith, Fryer, Howe, Park, Mengelkoch, McGowen, Jondas, Day, Eckes, Luby and Schiebe.

During the next 11 years, the school struggled to do its best to survive. Some students continued through 8th grade, others dropped out after completing the 3rd, 4th or 5th grade. The community was growing and many of the older children were needed at home to help clear land or harvest crops, plus the general attitude that if a boy or girl could read and write, there was little reason to waste more time going to school.

In 1869, Gertrude Howe was hired as a teacher. The School Board consisted of Jacob Mengelkoch, Clements, Mengelkoch, Nicolas Bofferding and Jonas Howe. In 1869, Jacob Mengelkoch was awarded the fuel contract to supply dry oak wood, cut up to fit the stove for \$3.60 per cord. This was also the year that increased enrollment in school prompted the Board to consider expanding the size of the school building. During the next three years, the School Board met frequently to discuss the future needs of the school system. In 1872, the decision had been made to build a new school and to move to a more favorable location.



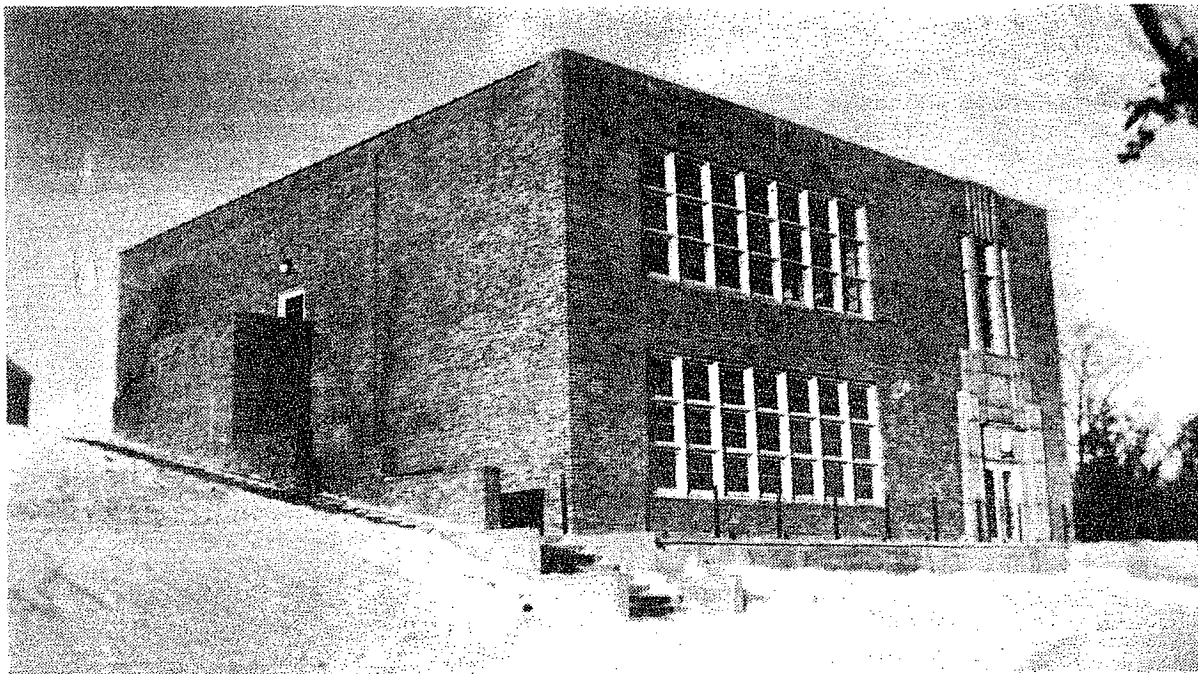
In 1872, Clements Mengelkoch was awarded a contract to build a new wood frame school house on the newly acquired location. The cost was not to exceed \$600. The location was approximately 100 feet east of where the present Beacon Heights School is now and the Board approved a bond issue of \$375 to insure the financing of the project. Other financial transactions during this period included the sale of books to the students for 11 cents for a first grade reader, and as much as 69 cents for higher grade books. The most expensive book was a geography book for \$1. The financial statement for 1869 showed a balance of \$19.53 after Miss Howe's salary of \$133 for four and one-half months work was taken out. There were other miscellaneous expenses such as a broom for 35 cents, matches and dipper for 40 cents, lawyer fees \$5 and a payment on a note to Nicolas Bofferding for \$36.

1872 was a big year in the history of District 95. It was getting a new building which had desks, a well for water, and blackboards. Clem Mengelkoch built the structure with the help of many neighbors and it was ready at the start of the school year starting in September. Miss Howe was still the teacher, but she was going to get some help. Ella Parker was hired to help with the increased enrollment. The names of Scherer, Gates, Frost and others had been added to the list of permanent residents.

During the next several years, our records show that the following teachers were hired at District 95: Annie Moriarity, R. C. Knapp, Mary Jardine, Bridget McGowan, Adeline Jarvais, Ella Doyle, and May McLean. This brings us up to the year 1921. The teachers salary had increased to \$105 per month. The janitorial work was performed primarily by the teachers and students, however, major jobs like washing windows and scrubbing floors were done for extra pay by local help.

The 1920's were relatively stable years with Miss Margaret Cavanagh and Mr. Osterberg sharing teaching responsibilities. Mr. Osterberg was the first male teacher at District 95 according to our records. Tragedy struck the community in the Spring of 1924. The instant death of Leo Cavanagh is still vividly remembered by students, teachers and neighbors. The accident happened during lunch hour when Leo took his turn to slide down the school house hill and over the road at the bottom of the hill. He was on a homemade wooden sled and he hit the front wheel of a car that was traveling on the road. This is the only recorded fatal accident at the school during its 124 year history.

During the 1930's, enrollment increased slowly and steadily until the need for additional space could no longer be ignored. In 1939, the Cavanagh Brothers were awarded a contract to build a two-room brick school on the same location and adjacent to the wood structure which had served the community needs since 1872. The 1939-1940 classes had the rare experience of spending part of the year in one school house and finishing the year in a different one. The move was made during Christmas vacation and needless to say, everyone involved was delighted and enthusiastic. The old wood building was removed during the summer of 1940 by Ed and Art Schiebe. Thus ending 82 years of history and memories of the one room school which served so many so well.



The new school had two classrooms, a small auditorium and facilities for serving hot lunches. For the first time in the history of District 95, there was inside plumbing, including toilet facilities. The cost of the new structure was \$30,000 and enrollment at the time of occupancy was 58 students and two teachers - Mr. G. E. Osterberg and Miss Verdell Reilly. Grades 1 through 4 were the classes taught by Miss Reilly and Mr. Osterberg had Grades 5 through 8. Mrs. Frank Baumann was the first cook. School Board members included Steve Gates, Andrew Scherer and Albert Schiebe.

The 1940's were very active years in population growth and educational concept changes. The idea of separating the 7th and 8th grades from the elementary status and calling them Junior High students was gaining popularity and attending High School seemed like the thing to do. So many new problems became major issued. School enrollment was increasing at 15 to 25% each year and the space in the new building would soon be crowded.

In 1946, the Board of District 95 voted to dissolve the district and become part of Wayzata School District 284. Students could then remain in the same system from Kindergarten through grade 12, therefore, the existence of District 95 ended in 1946. From that time until the school closed in 1982, it was known as the "Beacon Heights School".

Continued population growth in the Plymouth area made it necessary to expand the school facilities once again, so in 1949, four more classrooms were added; two up and two down across the front of the existing building. In 1955, still another addition was made. It included seven classrooms and a library on the back of the building and a gymnasium and a kitchen on the west side of the building. This was the final addition and it brought the total number of classrooms to 14 and the teaching staff to 15. Total enrollment from 1955 through 1982 varied between 450 and 500 students in Grades K through 6. The Junior High and Senior High students were transported by bus to other locations within the Wayzata School System. Mrs. Julie Quady, Mr. Weeks and Mr. Benko served as Principals of Beacon Heights prior to its closing in 1982.