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## HISTORY OF THE GUTHRIE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

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### CHAPTER I

That a clear understanding may be had of the motives that led to the establishment of the Guthrie County High School, a review of certain phases of the historical development of education, both in United States and Iowa, will be valuable. The type of school which evolved from each section was dependent, to some extent, upon the economic, industrial and social conditions existing in that section. New England developed the small district school, the middle states developed the parochial school and the southern states developed the county school. As the western country was developed by people from these sections, they introduced educational ideas familiar to them in their former homes.

Numerous plans for an educational system were proposed and abandoned, for no one of those that were brought forward met with the approval or satisfied the desires of the people in a sufficient measure to be permanently adopted and developed. All proposals submitted contained some reference to the foundation of secondary schools, and the county was the size of the unit most frequently recommended for this advanced type of education.

Thomas Jefferson submitted to the legislature of Virginia a concrete plan for the education of all youth, which has been given widespread attention due to the prominence of its author. He proposed that each county be divided into small districts or "hundreds" in which an elementary school should be kept for

at least three months of the year, the expenses to be paid by the district, and if a longer school year were desired, the support would come from the parents. The unit next above the elementary school was the county which was to maintain a higher school, or academy, and students in this institution were to be chosen from among the best in the elementary school. An examiner was to select annually from each elementary school the "best genius," and here these youths of promise were to be instructed chiefly in the classics, for five or six years, tuition free. When prepared to enter William and Mary College, a state university was probably already in Jefferson's mind, the upper half of these selected secondary students were to be transferred to that institution to continue without charge to a degree. This was Jefferson's plan to secure from the ranks of the common people young men of keenest intellect who might become leaders in the political life of the state. Those falling in the lower half of those who completed the course in the county academy returned to the elementary schools as teachers. It is held by many that this plan for a graduated system of schools, though it never went into operation in Virginia, had great influence on later educational organization.

Indiana had included in the constitution of 1816<sup>1</sup> an article providing, as in the Virginia plan, for a state system of education from the township to the university, and the legislature in the year 1818 made partial provision for the establishment of schools, proposing a "seminary" or higher school in each county, but later laws emphasized the small district unit. However, the county as the proper unit for secondary education was clearly in the minds of the founders of the state.

During the year 1853, the General Assembly of Ohio<sup>2</sup> passed an act pertaining to a state system of education that was extremely comprehensive. It provided for a system of graded schools beginning with the township and following through to the state university.

Illinois, also, and notably Michigan, experimented with their organization of education along lines clearly suggested by the Jefferson plan. That Iowa, fourth state to be erected from

<sup>1</sup>Indiana Constitution of 1816, Art. 9, Sec. 1 and 2.  
<sup>2</sup>Statutes of the State of Ohio, 1854, Vol. III, p. 2217.



Jefferson's purchase, came under the same influences will appear in the following pages.

Clarence Ray Aurner<sup>3</sup> in his *History of Education in Iowa*, divides secondary education into five periods, namely: the academy period, the first county high school period, the second county high school period, the township high school period and the local district high school period. In the discussion of any one of these periods, there must of necessity be considerable overlapping, for no one of them had an abrupt beginning or end. The evolution of our social organization has brought many and notable changes that have had a fundamental effect upon our educational system, and perhaps the most important of these has been the changing conception of secondary schools. Slowly this school has been built, not by legislation, but by experiment.

The academy period reached its highest point of development in the United States about 1850, but even at this date the academy in Iowa was only getting well under way. Before this type of school had an opportunity to become firmly established as an integral part of our educational system, public high schools were widely discussed, and, in some parts of eastern Iowa, had been established.

In 1856 the Horace Mann Commission<sup>4</sup> reported to the Sixth General Assembly a very comprehensive bill dealing with education. No action was taken at that time, but the Seventh General Assembly on March 12, 1858, passed "an act for the public instruction of the State of Iowa."<sup>5</sup> Sections Fifty-nine and Sixty of this act pertained to the establishment of a county high school in each county. The law provided that the board of presidents of the school districts in any county might determine whether a county high school should be established, and required them, if they determined to establish such school, to elect nine trustees, who, together with the county superintendent, should constitute a board of high school trustees with power to have general charge of such school.

State Superintendent Maturin L. Fisher viewed the enactment of this legislation as an important forward stride in Iowa education. Quoting from his report of 1858<sup>6</sup>: "This system of high

<sup>3</sup>Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 171-255.

<sup>4</sup>Iowa Legislative Documents, pp. 191-200, *High School*, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup>Session Laws of the Seventh General Assembly, 1858, pp. 57-88.

<sup>6</sup>*Annual Report of the Department of Public Instruction*, 1858.

schools . . . is the identical plan recommended by the immortal Jefferson to the legislature of Virginia the next year after he wrote the Declaration of Independence." The above quotation may have been somewhat overenthusiastic, but a comparison of the plan of Jefferson and the Act of 1858 brings out striking similarities.

The measure, however, appears to have met with popular disfavor. It was in advance of public sentiment, if not of the financial ability, of the time. Under the provision of this act only four counties attempted to found high schools.<sup>7</sup> Of these only one ever operated. Marshall County projected a high school at Albion, erected a building, and, according to some reports, held school for a year; but it was found impossible to continue thereafter, because the act of the legislature was held unconstitutional and the financial assistance promised under the law was not forthcoming; therefore the project was abandoned.

Clayton County complied with all of the provisions of the law, but the supervisors refused to give the board of trustees the amount of money necessary, which the county judge, under the law, had been ordered to levy. Thereafter the high school of the county of Clayton brought suit against the county to recover this sum—\$3,000. The district court ruled that the act was unconstitutional, violating Article Nine of the Constitution of Iowa. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court and reviewed in the June term, 1859. The court upheld the decision of the lower court (*The High School of the County of Clayton v. The County of Clayton*, 9 Ia., 175).

When the law of 1858 was repealed in December of that year, the board of education re-enacted almost all of the provisions of the above act with the exception of the sections pertaining to high schools. A group of educators from Adams County<sup>8</sup> had requested the board to include legislation concerning secondary schools, but the people generally were not in sympathy with the proposition, and high school development was left to the local district, unmolested, for a period of twelve years.

The second county high school period, with which we are primarily concerned, had its inception in the Thirteenth General

<sup>7</sup>Dubuque, Johnson, Clayton and Marshall. Aurner gives an account of the Johnson and Dubuque effort in *History of Education in Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 187-94.

<sup>8</sup>Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 193-275.



Assembly which convened January, 1870. One would conclude that there was an urgent demand for legislation on this subject at this time, since the bill, known as Senate File Number 226, introduced by Marcus Tuttle of Cerro Gordo County, passed both houses without any material changes (Acts of the Thirteenth General Assembly, Chap. 116. The law went into effect April 24, 1870).

The provisions of this second county high school law are strikingly similar to those of the first law of 1858, the chief difference being that where in the first the population of the counties must be 20,000 and the decision for establishment lay with the board of presidents of the district, in the second the population requirement was 2,000 and the initiative lay with the voters themselves. This decided reduction in population requirements was clearly in the interest of the more sparsely settled western counties, which, under the earlier law, would have found it impossible to establish a centralized secondary school.

Alonzo Abernathy,<sup>9</sup> state superintendent, expressed the belief that the high school under this legislation would be a valuable auxiliary to the elementary schools. However, in general, the people did not respond favorably to the law of 1870, for only eight counties, as revealed by this study, attempted the organization of a county high school, and only one of these succeeded in successfully operating such a school under the act, namely, Guthrie County.

The township high school movement has never gained a great amount of momentum in Iowa. The idea was borrowed from other states, and while the law of 1858 would have permitted a township set-up, there has never been any legislation since that time relative to the establishment of secondary education on a township basis. It might be said that the township was the forerunner of the consolidated movement, for it was the purpose to give free secondary schooling to all children in the township.

None of the types of schools proposed in the above periods seemed to meet the needs or satisfy the desires of the people.

<sup>9</sup>Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, Vol. III, p. 201. That at least eight counties organized, or attempted to organize, under the act of 1870 has been shown by Aurner.

Superintendent of public instruction, Alonzo Abernathy, shows in the *Seventeenth Regular Report* for the period 1873-75, pp. 38, 39, 40, that several counties proposed to establish county high schools under the law of 1870, but in each county the proposition was defeated, showing that the law of 1870, as well as the law of 1858, was not popular with the public.

Either legislation was in advance of public sentiment or the several communities wished to establish their own secondary education to meet their own individual needs. In any case, barring the single county district experiment to be described in succeeding chapters, the public school system of Iowa has evolved into an excellent example of the small unit type.

## CHAPTER II

The first settlers established themselves in what is now Guthrie County in the year 1848,<sup>10</sup> but it was not until two years later that there was a sufficient number of people in the new territory to institute a county organization. At the regular session of the legislature of 1850, which convened in Iowa City, then the state capital, an act was passed which legalized the county of Guthrie.<sup>11</sup> The same session appointed a committee, Isaac H. Walters of Marion County, David Bishop of Madison County and Louis Whitten of Polk County, to locate a county seat. These commissioners, with the exception of Mr. Walters, who for some reason did not serve, after surveying the ground decided that Panora should be the seat of justice of the newly organized county. Government in pioneer days required but few offices and only the occasional holding of court; consequently, no courthouse was built at the establishment of Guthrie County. Rooms in buildings in various parts of Panora were used for the county offices and a place appropriate for holding court was available and utilized for this purpose when necessary. In June, 1853,<sup>12</sup> drafts were made for a courthouse, but the plans did not materialize. On March 16, 1857,<sup>13</sup> again appears a project for a courthouse and a contract for a building was agreed upon, but on September 29<sup>14</sup> of the same year the records show that the contract was annulled and \$200 paid by the county to the contractor. No reason for this action can be discovered. Early in 1859,<sup>15</sup> in compliance with the orders of the board of supervisors, a frame building was built on the square which is located in the center of the town. This building served as a county courthouse until the seat of government was removed from Panora to Guth-

<sup>10</sup>Continental Historical Society, *History of Guthrie County*, 1884, pp. 259-47.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 1884, p. 337.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 338.

rie Center. The proposal to transfer the seat of justice was the beginning of a bitter quarrel between Panora and Guthrie Center and played a significant part in the history of the county and its high school. Before the seat of government was definitely settled, Stuart became involved also.

Panora was situated in the far eastern part of the county, though north and south it was in the center; however, the drift of population since 1850 had pointed towards a development westward, and it was only natural to expect that the county seat should be near the center of the county.

The Rock Island Railroad<sup>16</sup> had been built across the southern part of the county, and Guthrie Switch, now Menlo, and the town of Casey had been founded near this railroad. During this time, in the year 1856, Guthrie Center had been laid out very near the geographical center of the county.

In March, 1859,<sup>17</sup> a petition was presented to the board of supervisors requesting that the seat of government be moved from Panora to Guthrie Center, and in the following April the matter was submitted to a vote of the people, the outcome being that Panora retained the county seat by a majority of twenty votes. On March 5, 1860,<sup>18</sup> just a year following the introducing of the first petition, there was presented another petition asking for the removal of the seat of government of the county to Guthrie Center, but at the same time the residents of Panora set forth a statement of remonstrance against the resubmission of the question. The sharp disagreement of the two groups led the board of supervisors to hold a public hearing, and several people appeared who claimed that they had signed the protest by a misrepresentation of facts and wished their names to remain on the original petition. The supervisors allowed the question to come to a vote on April 2, 1860.<sup>19</sup> This time the seat of government was carried to Guthrie Center by a majority of nineteen, and on April 7<sup>20</sup> the judge of the district court legally granted the county seat to the sister town only seven miles distant. Things were fairly quiet until January, 1861,<sup>21</sup> when Panora demanded that the matter be reopened, but since legal

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<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 732.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 1884, p. 338.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 1884, p. 339.



publicity was not given, the petition was denied. In spite of these defeats, in September, 1861,<sup>22</sup> the people of Panora and vicinity again demanded a public vote on the question and after much debate, the supervisors allowed the petition. Accordingly, in April, 1862,<sup>23</sup> a vote was taken with the result that the seat of justice was carried back to Panora by a majority of seventy-seven.

By this time the Civil War held uppermost place in thoughts and minds of men and women, and issues of state and national affairs were more vital than a mere neighborhood wrangle over the location of a county seat. Consequently, there was no further effort made to shift the seat of justice until after the war was over and the reorganization period had begun. At this time the men had returned from the conflict, new settlers were steadily filling the western part of the county, and it was felt that the county seat should be fixed definitely and finally in the center of the county. Naturally Panora did not share this feeling and when, in 1870,<sup>24</sup> another vote was taken, that town retained the coveted prize by a majority of twenty-nine. But once more, in 1873,<sup>25</sup> the matter was brought before the people and an election, held in October of that year, resulted in a victory for Guthrie Center by a majority of one hundred eighty-two votes. Considering the population of the county, this was regarded as a very large majority, and the seat of government was moved from Panora to Guthrie Center where it has since remained. The battle had been a bitter one. Three times within a decade and a half the seat of justice had been changed. Half a century has not served to wipe out all evidence of ill will developed in the struggle. But in the end each town came out triumphant; Guthrie Center secured the courthouse and Panora became the seat of a high school destined to be known for a generation far beyond the limits of the county.

How the idea of a county high school originated from this quarrel seems to be best explained in the following way. Sometime after the Civil War a young lawyer by the name of James Brown came from Indiana to Panora and formed a law partnership with Colonel S. D. Nichols. He took part in the last

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 1884, p. 393.

county seat campaign, and when the seat of government was removed in 1873, began looking around for some sort of satisfactory agreement whereby both towns would benefit. Being familiar with the county high school law passed by the Thirteenth General Assembly in 1870, he proposed that Guthrie Center keep the county seat and Panora be given a county high school, using the Swamp Land Fund of \$21,388.94 to build a county courthouse and a county high school. This seemed a feasible adjustment and distribution, and consequently, at the general election of 1874,<sup>25</sup> the proposition for a county high school at Panora was adopted by the electors and the building formerly used as a courthouse was appropriated for the use of this school, no attempt being made at this time to include the suggestion made by Mr. Brown.

Upon the removal of the seat of government to Guthrie Center, it was obvious that a new building for a courthouse would be necessary, but no attempt was made to bring this proposition before the voters until the general election of 1875. At this election a proposal that the sum of \$25,000 be appropriated for the erection of a courthouse in Guthrie Center<sup>27</sup> was rejected by the people by a large majority. The measure was opposed strenuously by the people of Panora on the grounds that there was already a building in the county that had been built for the same purpose.

It was at this point that the compromise proposed by James Brown was effected. A decision was made to utilize the Swamp Land Fund<sup>28</sup> for two new buildings—a courthouse in Guthrie Center and a county high school in Panora. This seemed to be a very satisfactory arrangement and a special election was held

<sup>25</sup>*History of Guthrie Co.*, 1884, p. 305.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>28</sup>Mrs. S. B. Maxwell, *Centennial History of Guthrie County, Iowa*, 1876, pp. 153-54. The swamp land fund of Guthrie County originated from a donation of the swamp and overflowed lands of the State of Iowa, by the United States, under an Act of Congress, passed in 1850. The Legislature of Iowa conveyed to the different counties of the State, such of these lands as lay within the limits of each county.

The county of Guthrie ordered the selection of the swamp lands, in the spring of 1855; the agent, Capt. Thos. Seely, who was appointed by Judge James Henderson, selected and returned to Commissioner of the General Land Office, in July following, 11,700 acres.

Of this amount, all, with the exception of 720 acres, had been sold by the United States, previous to the approval of the selections made by the county agent, by the Commissioner. Of the last named amount, 400 acres have been patented to the county, and the Government has indemnified the county for 2,400 acres, sold for cash, amounting to \$3,000 and 4,440 acres in scrip which was located in Carroll County. By the sale of this last named amount, the county has realized \$22,000.



on February 14, 1876,<sup>29</sup> on the following question: "Shall the Swamp Land Funds of Guthrie County, Iowa, be devoted by the board of supervisors of said county to the erection of a courthouse in said county and a county high school at Panora in said county in the proportion of two-thirds thereof to the erection of said courthouse and one-third to the erection of said county high school building?" This proposition received the affirmative vote of a substantial majority.

Following this election, George Gray and others of the town of Stuart, brought action against George Mount, chairman of the board of supervisors, and others, praying that the defendants be restrained from appropriating the Swamp Land Fund in the manner prescribed in the vote. This case was heard in the District Court of Guthrie County. The judge allowed an injunction restraining the supervisors from appropriating the Swamp Land Funds to the erection of a courthouse until that proposition had been legally submitted to the voters and adopted, but no restraint was placed upon that portion of the vote pertaining to the appropriation of the Swamp Land Funds for the county high school. At the following term of court this injunction was dissolved and the case was immediately appealed to the Supreme Court of Iowa. The decision of this body was rendered at the June session, 1877, reversing the decision of the lower court (*Gray et al v. Mount et al*, 45 Ia., 591).

Materials in this study reveal that before the decision was given by the high court, the plans had already been made and were going forward towards the erection of a building for the county high school and that the ultimate decision of the Supreme Court did not affect in any way the status of the high school.

### CHAPTER III

The litigation which has been discussed in the preceding chapter did not affect the organization and opening of the school. Immediately following the election of October, 1874, the county supervisors, in compliance with the law, appointed the following men to serve as trustees of the proposed county high school: John Bowers, R. H. Hopkins, James F. Moore, James Foster, A. S. Miller, and John Lonsdale. Mr. Lonsdale failed to qualify and L. J. Pentecost of Panora was appointed to serve in his

<sup>29</sup>See *Gray et al v. Mount et al*, 45 Ia., 591.



stead. These directors held their initial meeting at Panora, November 6, 1874.<sup>30</sup> Giles C. Miller, by virtue of his office as county superintendent, was president, L. J. Pentecost was elected secretary and John Bowers treasurer. The foremost problem these men had to consider was the location of the school. Decision was reached that the ground used as a public square in the town of Panora should be the location of the high school, and a committee was authorized to examine and report at the next assembly of the board the possibility of utilizing the abandoned courthouse which had been built on this site. If this building seemed desirable, the committee was further authorized to estimate repairs and cost of the remodeling necessary to make it suitable for use as a school building. The committee reported at a meeting held on January 5, 1875, and the repairs and changes recommended were ordered made. At this meeting, also, it was agreed that the school should open on the first Monday in January, 1876.

The employment of teachers was entrusted to the county superintendent,<sup>31</sup> and he secured as principal of the new school, Mr. M. M. Wagner of New York, with C. E. Peterson of Panora as his assistant. Mr. Wagner was a graduate of the Pottsdam Normal School, Pottsdam, New York, and Mr. Peterson had completed a course at Iowa State College, Ames. Upon the shoulders of these two inexperienced men rested the responsibility of organizing and operating the Guthrie County High School for the first year of its existence.

In accordance with the statute, the trustees determined the maximum number of students who were to be admitted from the several townships and the stated requirements for admission. Apportionment was based upon the number of children of school age in each township, and then, if these townships did not send their quota, the school could admit any and all who applied and passed the entrance requirements. These requirements consisted of being able to answer satisfactorily seventy-five percent of the questions used by the county superintendent in the examination of teachers, and the county superintendent was to be the examining committee.

In January, 1876, the county high school formally opened its

<sup>30</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie Co. High School, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie Co. High School, p. 4.

doors to students. There were enrolled fifty-six pupils, mostly from in and near Panora. The response from the county at large this first year was not encouraging, there being no students from any great distance, and it seemed that the criticism that the school would serve only the territory of Panora was justified.

At the end of the first year, Mr. Wagner was replaced as principal by F. C. Wildes<sup>32</sup> of New London, Iowa. While Mr. Wagner had been a very good teacher and principal, it was thought that a more mature and experienced man would be better during the time the school was becoming established. Mr. Wagner and Mr. Peterson were retained as assistant principal and third teacher respectively.

At the very beginning of Mr. Wildes' incumbency, two events took place which were important, the setting up of a so-called teachers' course as a part of the curriculum, and the erection of a new school building. The inclusion of the teachers' course was important in that it had considerable influence upon fixing the school definitely as a part of the educational life of the county. There was a definite need for better trained teachers in the rural schools, and the elementary pedagogical offering would meet this need, at least in part, and youths would be drawn into the school who might later continue in the more advanced work, so the normal course was added in the fall of 1876, serving not only for the training of teachers but also as a preparatory course, since it was little more than a review of the common branches.

During the first year the curriculum<sup>33</sup> consisted strictly of academic studies which would prepare the student for college entrance, the following subjects being offered: Botany, Algebra, Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Geology, General History, United States History, English Literature, Latin, Greek, Trigonometry, French, and German. The preparatory course in 1876-78 added the following subjects: Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Civil Government, Reading, Drawing, Writing, Music, Philosophy of Education and Methods.

In 1878 Principal A. B. Collins dropped the name preparatory course and added what he called a teachers' course which in-

<sup>32</sup>Mrs. S. B. Maxwell, *Centennial History of Guthrie County, Iowa*, 1876, pp. 154-55. Prof. F. C. Wildes was a native of Bath, Maine, where he was educated. He came to Iowa in 1869, settling at Burlington, where he remained but a short time; he then removed to Danville, where he resided four years, then to New London, where he remained three years, and came to Guthrie in September, 1876.

<sup>33</sup>See Appendix, Table B.



cluded only a review of the elementary subjects. Following the introduction of these subjects, and continuing for twenty years, all students during their first year were required to take this preparatory course, which, in effect, left the high school only a three-year school.

The trustees were now ready to take advantage of the fortunate compromise suggested by Mr. Brown, and to provide more adequate quarters for the school. At a meeting held September 18, 1876, at Panora, the contract was let for a building, the cost of which was not to exceed \$12,000. This building was built from funds realized from the sale of the Swamp Lands, a total amount of approximately \$8,000 being derived from this source. Fifteen firms submitted bids varying from \$10,490 to \$14,440. The bid of Jackson and Garlow of Panora, \$10,490,<sup>34</sup> was lowest, and this firm was awarded the contract. The difference between the cost of the building and the amount realized from the sale of the swamp lands was paid by property tax levy on the taxable property of the county.

The board of trustees appointed a building committee composed of two men to supervise the erection of the building. William Foster of Guthrie Center was appointed supervising architect and was paid at the rate of \$10.00<sup>35</sup> for every trip made, one each month as a rule. The location of this building was directly west of the former courthouse, on the same plot of ground but facing south. At a meeting in December, 1877,<sup>36</sup> the building was formally accepted by the board.

The courthouse which had been remodeled into a school building was sold at public auction and removed from the square. For many years it was located east of the square and was used as a town hall. Later it was sold and moved to a farm on the east edge of town where it was used as a corn crib until finally torn down.

At the expiration of Mr. Wildes' second year, the board of trustees, at a meeting held in Guthrie Center July 5, 1878,<sup>37</sup> elected Mr. D. G. Perkins as the third head of the Guthrie County High School at a salary of \$1,000 per year for a period of ten months, with the former principal, M. M. Wagner, as his

<sup>34</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie County High School, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie County High School, p. 27.



first assistant. Mr. Perkins did not accept, so A. B. Collins of Pottsdam, New York, was elected to the position at a salary of \$90 per month.

Very little is known of Mr. Collins except that he was a graduate of the Pottsdam Normal School and that his home was in New York. He was the first principal of the school who attempted to assume the duties of administrator as we think of them today. Undoubtedly his training and experience in the east had given him some professional advantages over his predecessors, and he attempted to reorganize the school on a more progressive basis. On September 16, 1878, he appeared before the board of trustees with five papers on school organization marked A, B, C, D and E. Paper A was entitled "Principles of Government;" B, "Courses of Instruction;" C, "Status of School;" D, "Needs of the School;" and E, "Sundry Articles Wanted and Repairs Needed." Unfortunately these papers have not been preserved, but the records show that the board adopted almost all of the recommendations made.<sup>38</sup>

While Mr. Collins was a man of no small ability, his health did not permit him to remain the complete year. He resigned April 18, 1879, and M. M. Wagner, his assistant, was appointed principal to complete the year.

With the close of the year 1878-79, the experimental period of the Guthrie County High School may be regarded as coming to an end. The school had made an appreciable growth, a new building had been built, and the people of the county, who, during these four years had been eagerly watching to see what might happen, were at least partially satisfied that the school was a going concern. Yet, it must be said that the county as a unit of school administration for secondary education was not accepted generally by the constituency, and those in the more remote sections of the county looked upon the school with some misgivings, still believing that it would serve only the territory in and around Panora, and that it was being operated with their tax money from which they were deriving little benefit. The following table shows the distribution of students during the first year the high school was in operation:

<sup>38</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie County High School, p. 28.

TABLE I

Attendance at the Guthrie County High School by Townships  
for the School Year 1875-76

Baker Township.....	None
Bear Grove Township.....	4
Beaver Township.....	1
Cass Township.....	30
Dodge Township.....	2
Grant Township.....	None
Highland Township.....	None
Jackson Township.....	2
Orange Township.....	None
Penn Township.....	None
Richland Township.....	1
Seeley Township.....	2
Stuart Township.....	None
Thompson Township.....	None
Union Township.....	None
Valley Township.....	5
Victory Township.....	6

During the first four years the school had acquired a fairly firm foundation. Attendance had increased and now represented nine of the seventeen townships in the county. It cannot be said that the period of experiment had passed, for in one sense the the entire life of the school was an experiment, but a new era seems to open with the eighties, and this may be called the period of development.

#### CHAPTER IV

The second period, or the period of development and relatively rapid growth of the county high school, covered, approximately, the years 1879-1903. During this time the school grew in size, favor, and influence until it became a fixed institution in the educational life of the county. Seven principals served, most of them leaving a definite imprint upon the minds and lives of their students: Richard D. Jones, 1879-83; William G. Ray, 1883-87; Rev. F. M. Elliott, 1887-88; Andrew W. McPherson, 1888-94; Lee M. Swindler, 1894-98; Francis E. Lenoher, 1898-1900; Benjamin F. Findley, 1900-03.

In September, 1879, Richard D. Jones came to the Guthrie County High School as the fourth principal. Mr. Jones was a graduate of Grinnell College and had had considerable experi-

ence as teacher and administrator in Iowa schools. With his administration there began a period of prosperity and growth. Through the first four years interest had slowly increased, but before the school could really become an integral part of the educational system of the county it must show some tangible results. When the fifth year commenced, to some degree such results had been shown in the number of teachers in rural schools who had benefited through county high school training. Parents whose children were in attendance and who were thus in direct contact with the school, realizing its influence, were its strongest supporters. A careful perusal of the *Guthrie County Vedette*, a weekly newspaper published at Panora, convinces the reader that the high school was slowly becoming a recognized institution.

Principal Jones was a student of foreign languages and a firm believer that Latin should be taught in all high schools. Consequently, this department of the curriculum was considerably altered. Latin Reading, Caesar, Cicero and Virgil were emphasized, and Greek and French dropped. In the winter term of 1883, German was added.

Considerable attention was also given to the teachers' course. This particular department was the medium through which the school reached the greatest number of people, because here results could most readily be seen. By far the greatest number of students who enrolled in the school either had taught or were planning to teach. As these teachers increased in efficiency, the prestige of the high school rose over the county. The county superintendent reported in 1883 that virtually every teacher in the county had at one time or another been enrolled in the county high school.<sup>39</sup>

Mr. Jones was fortunate in having as his first assistant Thomas J. Mahoney, who afterwards became superintendent of schools of Guthrie County and still later a prominent lawyer in the state of Nebraska. His home was not far from Panora; he understood Guthrie County and its problems; and he brought to the school a sympathetic understanding of the people who were, by their taxes, supporting it. He had a natural understanding of boys and girls of his day, their problems and perplexities, and many who attended the high school during these

<sup>39</sup>*Iowa School Report*, 1882-83, p. 82.



years remember with grateful hearts the kind, sympathetic and friendly advice of Thomas J. Mahoney.

The second principal to serve during this period was William G. Ray, with Mr. Cathcart and Miss Amelia Weidmann as his assistants. Mr. Ray was a graduate of Grinnell College, and at the time of his election had had no experience as a teacher in the public schools of Iowa. The writer has visited with Mr. Ray and appreciates fully the position which it was his to fill in the fall of 1883. He was succeeding a strong man who had won a large measure of support from a rather unwilling constituency and had definitely increased the efficiency of the school in the four years of his principalship. Upon Mr. Rays' shoulders fell the duty of continuing on the same upward plane. How well he did that can be told only by a study of what was accomplished during the next four years.

Each man who has served in the capacity of principal has left an imprint of his personality and character upon the school, and the contribution made by Mr. Ray in this respect is one of which any man might well be proud. Beginning with his administration for the first time an adequate classification of students was made. In his first year, 1883-84, there was a division of Seniors and Juniors—all others were grouped together. Two years later is found a more complete classification as follows: Seniors; Juniors; Second year students; First year, class A; First year, class B; First year, class C; and First year, class D. The first year students were classified in order, depending upon the excellence of their entrance examination grades, the "A" group being highest and the "D" group lowest.

It may be admitted that Mr. Ray assumed his duties as principal at a most favorable time. The school had been in operation for eight years; it had passed through the formative period; the ill feeling between Panora and Guthrie Center had subsided; citizens were beginning to see the need for such an institution. The results that had been obtained had won recognition and general approval. But unquestionably Mr. Ray furnished the quality of leadership needed at the time. He was a man of no little ability as he has demonstrated during his later life. He left the Guthrie County High School in the spring of 1887 to assume the superintendency of the Grinnell Public Schools.

Later he purchased an interest in the *Grinnell Herald*, with which he is still associated. He has served in the Iowa senate from Poweshiek County, was several terms mayor of Grinnell, was at one time president of the Iowa League of Municipalities, and at all times has served the people of his community faithfully and efficiently. How fortunate were the students during these four years to have had the opportunity of studying with this man!

It was no small task to select a successor to carry on the work of the preceding eight years. The trustees chose the Rev. F. M. Elliott as the third principal of this period and the seventh of the school. Mr. Elliott was a Presbyterian minister serving the church in Panora at the time of his selection. He was a minister, not a school administrator.

The fourth man to assume the duties of principal during this period was Andrew W. McPherson, a graduate of Northwestern University. As his name indicates, he was a Scotchman, very scholarly, sympathetic and understanding of children and their problems, kindly to those who were in school for an education, but severe and uncompromising with the shiftless and indifferent. He was the first principal who was assisted in the school by his wife. His period of incumbency proved to be the longest of any principal to that date, lasting six years, 1888-94.

When Mr. McPherson assumed the duties of his office, the school was an established institution, enrolling students from all but three or four townships in the county as well as from the eastern half of Dallas County.

TABLE II  
Attendance at the Guthrie County High School by Townships  
for the School Year 1884-85

Baker Township.....	5
Bear Grove Township.....	5
Beaver Township.....	10
Cass Township.....	65
Dodge Township.....	5
Grant Township.....	10
Highland Township.....	5
Jackson Township.....	15
Orange Township.....	None
Penn Township.....	5
Richland Township.....	2

Seeley Township.....	2
Stuart Township.....	None
Thompson Township.....	1
Union Township.....	None
Valley Township.....	15
Victory Township.....	10

During this period not much took place of outstanding interest, it was a period of relative quiet, yet one of steady growth. By this time the school had settled down to a steady routine of work. Some years the enrollment would be slightly larger than others, with an average of 200, the highest being reached in the year 1890-91, when there was a total attendance of 225.<sup>40</sup>

Lee M. Swindler assumed the duties of principal in the fall of 1894, succeeding Mr. McPherson. Mr. Swindler was an aggressive man as well as being an excellent educational leader, and he immediately set out to substantially increase the enrollment. He was graduated from the Guthrie County High School in the class of 1885, from Grinnell College in 1889, and had spent some little time pursuing advanced work at Yale University. In the year 1889 he came back to Guthrie County, was elected county superintendent of schools and served in this capacity for six years, 1889-94. As county superintendent he was chairman of the board of trustees of the high school and, consequently, was in constant contact with the school and its needs. Therefore, when he took over the principalship in the fall of 1894, he was already prepared to offer a major recommendation, namely, that another building be provided.

The building erected in 1876 had accommodations for about 125 pupils, but for several years the attendance had been 200 or more. The school had outgrown the building and additional space was greatly needed. The question which then presented itself was the practical one of ways and means. The chief enemies of the school were now those who were the most active proponents of the local school systems developing in various parts of the county. Many of these were decidedly against a new building. According to law, the board of trustees were

<sup>40</sup>At the time the high school had an enrollment of 225, the reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction show that the surrounding towns had the following approximate enrollments: Adel 84, Guthrie Center 50, Denison 94, Harlan 107, Atlantic 186, Jefferson 180 and Coon Rapids 80.



permitted to levy a tax, not to exceed five mills, for the purpose of maintaining the school, and it was estimated that a three-mill tax on the property of Guthrie County could finance a new building. At a meeting of the board in 1896,<sup>41</sup> it was decided to levy a tax sufficient to raise \$22,000 for this purpose. Immediately there was a protest raised from all parts of the county. One of the chief reasons advanced against a new building at this time, and it seems a very justifiable one, was that other schools in the county were developing secondary departments,<sup>42</sup> thus providing for their own children, and only the people of Panora and vicinity would be benefited by the proposed expenditure.

TABLE III

Attendance at the Guthrie County High School by Townships  
for the School Year 1894-95

Baker Township.....	None
Bear Grove Township.....	None
Beaver Township.....	1
Cass Township.....	80
Dodge Township.....	None
Grant Township.....	5
Highland Township.....	5
Jackson Township.....	5
Orange Township.....	None
Penn Township.....	None
Richland Township.....	2
Seeley Township.....	5
Stuart Township.....	None
Thompson Township.....	1
Union Township.....	None
Valley Township.....	10
Victory Township.....	15

TABLE IV

Attendance at the Guthrie County High School by Townships  
for the School Year 1895-96

Baker Township.....	4
Bear Grove Township.....	13
Beaver Township.....	2

<sup>41</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie County High School, p. 139.

<sup>42</sup>By this date the local town school movement was gaining momentum and high schools had been established in Guthrie Center, Stuart, Casey, Bayard, and Bagley. Naturally people in these towns were not willing to tax themselves to maintain a local high school and also a county high school from which their children could derive no benefit.

Cass Township .....	140
Dodge Township .....	13
Grant Township .....	4
Highland Township .....	2
Jackson Township .....	6
Orange Township .....	1
Penn Township .....	None
Richland Township .....	15
Seeley Township .....	12
Stuart Township .....	None
Thompson Township .....	1
Union Township .....	None
Valley Township .....	2
Victory Township .....	2
Audubon County .....	2
Dallas County .....	2

The fight against the new building was led by C. C. Ashton, editor of the *Guthrian* of Guthrie Center. Every reason conceivable was used as an argument against its construction, but the board of trustees were men who were not easily swayed, and since they had marked their course, they followed it to the letter, though knowing that their action would be likely to kill them politically. Charles Young, who had followed Mr. Swindler as county superintendent of schools, was one of the victims of the political feeling. Mr. Ashton appeared before the board demanding that they rescind the three-mill levy for construction purposes. This the board refused to do, and an injunction was sought and granted restraining the board of supervisors and county auditor from certifying this tax to the records.

A hearing was supposed to have been held at the October term of court, 1896, but no action was taken at that time. Finally the decision was handed down by Judge Wilkinson at Adel, in an adjoining county, on December 23, 1896. In this decision the injunction was dissolved and the board of trustees permitted to levy the tax.

After the failure of the injunction proceeding, Ashton led the fight in a new direction. Petitions were circulated all about the county, asking not only that the building project be abandoned but that the school be abolished. In these plans, also, the enemies of the county high school were defeated.

The only flaw that Mr. Ashton and his cohorts could now find in the proceedings of the board of trustees was that when the meeting of May 22, 1896, was called—said meeting being called to decide the building question—the purpose of the meeting was not stated in writing. The matter was purely technical, but gave to the Guthrie Center group the opportunity to begin the abandonment fight.

The friends of the county high school were determined to build, whatever the consequences. At a meeting of the board of trustees held on June 5, 1896,<sup>43</sup> before litigation began, an architect, G. E. Hallitt, was secured to design a plan for the new structure. At a subsequent meeting, September 2, 1896,<sup>44</sup> the contract was awarded to Mr. Tucker and, shortly after the injunction was dissolved, construction began. The building was pushed to completion and was accepted by the board on October 14, 1897,<sup>45</sup> the total cost being \$14,200. Accommodations were now available for 350 pupils.

The remark has frequently been made that this battle over the tax levy was the cause of the final abandonment of the high school, but as the situation is viewed after thirty years, it seems clear that this episode was but one of the many factors entering into the final disposition of the institution.

The sixth principal of this period was Francis E. Lenoher, who assumed his duties in September, 1898, and served until his death in 1900. Mr. Lenoher was a graduate of the Iowa State Normal, now Teachers College, and of the University of Iowa, a man of experience and vision. He is recalled by his students as an excellent instructor and an outstanding administrator, doubtless just the type of man to follow the preceding administration where so much dissension and ill feeling had been caused through the erection of a new building.

The seventh and last principal of this period was Mr. Benjamin E. Findley who served from 1900-03. The school was now entering more fully than ever before into relations with both elementary and higher education. In the year 1895, it had been fully accredited by the State University, which meant that its

<sup>43</sup>*Secretary's Record*, Guthrie County High School, p. 143.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 163.



graduates were received without examination, not only by that institution but by the other colleges and universities of this and adjacent states. In the latter part of Mr. Findley's administration, the high school was brought into direct relations with the elementary schools of the county, by an arrangement, universal now throughout the state, whereby any graduate of the eighth grade might enter the high school on the certificate of the county superintendent. Before this, an entrance examination had been required of each candidate for admission.

Mr. Findley's resignation brought to a close the phase of the history of the school here designated as the period of development. In this space of time a second building had been constructed, bringing the total capital outlay to \$30,000, not including campus; enrollment had increased; the curriculum had been broadened and a general feeling existed that this high school was on a level somewhat above that of surrounding town schools.

#### CHAPTER V

In the previous chapters the growth and development of the Guthrie County High School has been traced from its origin to the turn of the century. Its development had been watched with interest as an educational experiment, but the growth of the district high school had served to counteract any effort to establish county schools in other parts of the state. The school ranked well among other secondary schools in Iowa; its graduates were welcomed by the universities and colleges of this and adjacent states; it had sent many of its students back to the rural schools as teachers, far better trained than the average of the day, and it was easily the outstanding high school of Guthrie County. Its two buildings now gave reasonably adequate accommodations for the student body. Seven well-trained teachers were at work. Two curricula, well standardized for the time, were in operation, and an attendance of about 200 pupils, mostly rural and fairly well distributed throughout the county, each township being represented with the exception of four, seemed to justify the effort and expenditure of the public.

TABLE V

Attendance at the Guthrie County High School by Townships  
for the School Year 1907-08

Baker Township.....	5
Bear Grove Township.....	5
Beaver Township.....	2
Cass Township.....	115
Dodge Township.....	10
Grant Township.....	None
Highland Township.....	1
Jackson Township.....	10
Orange Township.....	5
Penn Township.....	None
Richland Township.....	10
Seeley Township.....	5
Stuart Township.....	None
Thompson Township.....	None
Union Township.....	1
Valley Township.....	10
Victory Township.....	15

Within the administration of the next principal, the period included in the nine years, beginning with 1903, the school probably reached the height of its power and influence.

In September, 1900, Mr. Harry E. Ilsley came to Panora as assistant principal and teacher of mathematics and science. He held this position for three years, when he resigned to attend the University of Iowa during the school year of 1903-04 in order to study for an advanced degree. When he left Panora, it was his plan and purpose to take up the study of medicine, but during the summer of 1904, Principal Findley resigned to accept the position of cashier of the Panora Savings Bank and Mr. Ilsley was offered his position. He accepted and continued to serve for twelve years, the longest period of any man in the history of the school.

When Mr. Ilsley assumed his duties in the fall of 1904, the school had been in operation for twenty-seven years, had graduated twenty-four classes, and had alumni and friends located in all sections of the county. The second building had been in use for five years, and the feeling of general good will towards the school was quite definitely felt. Economic conditions just then were much brighter than in the preceding decade, and parents were better able to afford their children the opportunity of

attending school. Consequently, there appears a considerable increase in enrollment and interest in the school during this period.

Although Mr. Ilsley's administration included nearly a decade and a half of the happiest years the school ever enjoyed, richest, perhaps, in educational values, objective features which the historian can set down in black and white are not conspicuous. The records, of course, reveal certain facts of significance, such as increasing attendance, a slightly larger teaching staff, enrichment of the curriculum, and increasing costs. But matters less tangible, less easily segregated for discussion, are even more important in this period of the history of the school, matters relating to school spirit and the inner life of the institution.

Materials available for this study have not revealed, except at widely separated intervals, much of the personal qualities of the men who directed the affairs of the school, namely the principals, board members, and influential patrons, but in the case of Mr. Ilsley, perhaps due to the length of his term of service, there is more abundant evidence of the play of personality. This appears, for example, in his method of discipline and control of students, both during school hours and about the town. By the middle of Mr. Ilsley's term of service about 225 young people were in regular attendance, 100 boys and 125 girls. Of these approximately half were rooming and boarding in town, going to their homes, as a rule, for weekends. The problems of discipline were naturally quite different from those usually found in the town high school where parents must assume responsibility for out of school behavior of the pupils. Mr. Ilsley developed a school spirit which made it possible for him to place a large measure of responsibility for proper behavior upon the students themselves. Indeed, it would appear that college methods of control rather than those of the usual high school prevailed. Students passed from class to class and from one building to the other with complete freedom. The same spirit prevailed as a general thing among the pupils about the town where they usually conducted themselves more like well-disposed young collegians than high school pupils. This same type of conduct was characteristic of the classrooms, also, where teacher and



pupil met as fellow seekers after knowledge. There was little occasion for correction or punishment of any kind. The secret of this type of school discipline was, it is said by the friends of Mr. Ilsley, due to the personal qualities of the man, who always had himself under perfect control and seemed to inspire others to achieve a good degree of poise and self-mastery.

This fine spirit entered, also, into the extra-curricular activities of those years. Literary societies were brought to a vigorous state of efficiency. The work attracted much attention throughout the school and the town. Perhaps the most outstanding event of the year was the Junior-Senior Contest. This consisted of a program of readings given by certain chosen members of each class followed by a debate between two members of each class. The prize for the class winning the debate was the honor of winning. These contests grew in popularity and favor until it was considered, next to graduation, the most outstanding event of the year.

The social life of the school was tied up closely with the literary societies for the most part, and consisted of parties and picnics common in that day, though dancing seems not to have been among the approved forms of amusement.

Athletics never played an important part in the development of the school—that is, the school was never judged good merely because it had an undefeated football team. The scholastic achievement of the student body was the factor that was stressed and former students of this period still want to discuss the good grades they secured in their years of school attendance. However, sports and games had their place, and the school was always represented by good football teams. Its students were somewhat older and more mature than the high school average of the time, some being twenty-one and twenty-two years of age, and it was not always easy to schedule games.

Curricular changes in this period were significant. The school was among the first in the state to respond to the demand for agriculture as a secondary subject. In 1905 an Ames graduate, Mr. J. A. King, was secured, his primary function being to organize and teach a course in this subject. In the following years, many a country lad was led to see the practical applica-

tion of schooling to the problems of the farm. The home farms, town gardens, and county stock ranches served as laboratories, and the university inspector of schools at that time, Professor Forest C. Ensign, still bears testimony to the excellence of the work as he saw it.

The teachers' course was also improved within this period. Enough has already been said of the so-called teachers' curriculum of the earlier years. In 1909, state aid for normal training in high school was made available, and Guthrie County immediately met the new requirement. The improved normal training curriculum continued to attract a large proportion of the junior and senior girls during the next twenty years, or until the school was finally abandoned.

Domestic science won a place for itself during Mr. Ilsley's administration, coming into the course in the year 1905. Attention was also given to physical education.

It is felt that at this place in the history of the school some space should be devoted to another man who was, in a large measure, responsible, along with Mr. Ilsley, for the success of this period—Dr. C. O. Sones of Panora. It must not be forgotten that in building this institution the board of trustees had an important part in shaping its destinies. Dr. Sones was elected to this board in 1900, at the general election, and for twenty-five years was a member. For nineteen of these twenty-five years he was its secretary and in this position gave valuable service. In his quiet, unassuming way he was ever ready to do anything that would advance the cause of education in the county.

It has already been observed that each principal who served for any length of time left his stamp upon the school and community in such a way that he was remembered for years. This is especially apparent in the case of Harry E. Ilsley. His sterling character, remarkable influence, cheerful disposition and untiring efforts on behalf of the school have become indelibly stamped upon the history of education in Guthrie County. His was a record of tenure, community service and educational leadership that really made the school the outstanding institution that it was during this period. Mr. Ilsley not only served the school during the years of greatest prosperity, but also during

one of the most critical periods in its history—1912-16. He resigned in 1916 to assume the superintendency of the Spirit Lake schools, which position he still holds.

#### CHAPTER VI

As has been stated in the preceding chapter, Mr. Ilsley's administration embraced both the years that were the most prosperous and also those years which were the most critical. It was in the latter part of Mr. Ilsley's period of service, 1911, that the state-wide high school tuition law was enacted (Acts of the 34th G. A., Chap. 146). As will appear later, this law interfered seriously with the operation of the county high school and finally led to its abolishment.

The original county high school law of 1870, as passed by the legislature, made it mandatory upon the board of trustees to apportion among the several townships in the county the number of pupils who could attend the high school tuition free (Acts of the 13th G. A., Chap. 116). After this quota was reached in any township, others who attended must pay their own tuition. Further, no school corporation could have charged against it tuition if no students attended the high school from said corporation. This was to prevent school corporations in and around Panora from sending more than their apportionment and charging the tuition to a school corporation sending none. The Twenty-seventh General Assembly, 1898, amended the law,<sup>46</sup> providing that students who attended the high school from any township, above that township's apportionment, should have their tuition paid from the contingent fund of the home district.

The argument in favor of this amendment was three-fold: first, the growing necessity for an equalization of educational opportunity between country and town youth; second, the feeling that if the law were changed it would facilitate the establishment of other county high schools; and third, there was always the possibility of discrimination in administering the apportionment of tuition free pupils under the law of 1870. The most important of these three reasons was the necessity of giving country and town children alike the opportunity for high school educa-

<sup>46</sup>Acts of the 27th G. A., p. 48, Chap. 84, Sec. 4.



tion. Gradually the people of Iowa were becoming aware that the opportunities for education enjoyed by their children were by no means equal. The sentiment that made possible thirteen years later a state-wide free tuition law is here seen in the making. But it is a matter of local pride that Guthrie County first convinced the state legislature that every child within her bounds should be afforded an opportunity to attend a free high school.

Unfortunately, the amendment did not meet with full approval in the county, and the validity of the act was questioned by Cass Township, which was sending a considerable number of pupils above their apportionment to the county high school. Cass refused to pay from their contingent fund the tuition of these pupils. The board of trustees of the county high school sued the township to enforce payment. Cass defended the suit on two grounds: first, that the title of the act was defective, and that this violation of Article Three, Section Twenty-nine of the Constitution of Iowa automatically invalidated the act; and second, that the act was unconstitutional on the ground that the legislature had no power to compel the school corporation to pay for the education of pupils attending the county high school without the corporation's consent. The case was heard in the District Court in Guthrie County by Judge James D. Gamble, who rendered an opinion in favor of Cass Township. The board of trustees appealed to the Supreme Court, which body reversed the decision of the District Court, answering both counts as follows: The legislature of the state was empowered to provide a system of schools, elementary as well as secondary, and they also were empowered to support these same schools by taxation; therefore, the act was within the constitution and valid. (*Boggs et al v. The School Township of Cass, Guthrie County, Iowa*, 128 Ia., 15.)

Although the high school board had won the case, the people of the county did not appreciate the more favorable opportunity offered their children, little increase in attendance followed and no additional interest was created. No further legislation was enacted which affected the high school until 1911; then the Thirty-fourth General Assembly enacted the general tuition law

which provided that any student who presented the proper credentials could be admitted to any high school and that the district from which he came should, upon proper certification from creditor district, pay the tuition, which was to be a reasonable fee.<sup>47</sup> At that time it was thought that this action would solve the problem of equalizing the opportunities for education between town and country student. The law operated very effectively in ninety-eight of the ninety-nine counties, but it was not adaptable to Guthrie County because of the county high school.

Soon after its enactment an action was brought in the District Court which had a great amount of influence upon the future of the county high school. The town of Stuart maintained a four-year approved high school. Mr. and Mrs. Carter, living within two miles of Stuart and residing in the rural independent school district of Long Branch, had sent four youngsters to the Stuart High School. Previous to the fall of 1911, their parents had paid the tuition. After the Thirty-fourth General Assembly had passed the general tuition law, these parents assumed that the tuition of their children would be paid by the Long Branch district wherever they decided to send them to high school. The secretary of the Long Branch district refused to pay the tuition of these children on the ground that there was established and maintained at Panora the county high school to which these said students might be admitted tuition free. The independent district of Stuart brought an action against these parents to recover the amount of tuition due. The defendants demurred on the ground that the case came under the provisions of Chapter 146 of the Acts of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of Iowa, the general tuition law. The case was tried in the District Court of Guthrie County before Judge Loren N. Hayes, and decision given in favor of the independent district of Stuart. The defendants appealed to the Supreme Court of Iowa, which body gave its opinion on January 12, 1915, affirming the judgment of the lower court (*The Independent School District of Stuart v. Carter et al*, 168 Ia., 311). This case is so significant in the history of the school that extensive portions of the opinion handed down are quoted as follows:

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<sup>47</sup>Acts of the 34th G. A., Chap. 146, Sec. 3.



Any person of school age, who is a resident of a school corporation not offering a four-year high school course, and who had completed the course of study offered in such school corporation shall be permitted to attend any high school that will receive him, provided the average cost of tuition allowed shall not exceed the average cost of tuition in the nearest high school, under the conditions and provisions of Section Two of this act.<sup>48</sup>

And plainly enough, the school corporations who are to pay tuition are those furnishing schooling only preliminary to and but a part, if any, of a full high school course—such corporations as are to have been organized under Chapter Fourteen of Title Thirteen of the Code—and the controlling question is whether the rural independent school district of Long Branch actually “offered a four-year high school course.” There was no school within its limits where other than the common branches of learning were taught. The most done was to prepare for entrance into the high school. This, however, was not enough to put it in the class of corporations intended, for the district might offer the advantages of a high school course without maintaining a high school within the district. This is precisely what each school corporation of Guthrie County did. A county high school with a four-year course had been established under Chapter Twelve of Title Thirteen of the Code at Panora many years previous and was maintained during the period involved in this action from taxes levied on all the taxable property of the county. It was established by a vote of the electors of the county and managed by six trustees appointed by the board of supervisors.

Under the apportionment actually made under Section 2732 of Code Supplement, the rural independent district of Long Branch was entitled to send two students, tuition free. More might be received if the school were capable of accommodating them, and such appears to have been its condition, for its apportionment was on the basis of an attendance of 300, whereas there was an average attendance of but 160, and, if received, the tuition was payable by the district of the pupil's residence. Attendance at the county high school, then, was available to defendant's children, tuition free, and so because of their residence in the rural independent school district of Long Branch. This was “offering a four-year high school course” by it, within the meaning of the statute.

This action of the legislature and the decision of the Supreme Court in the foregoing case were very vital in the life of the Guthrie County High School, as well as in the life of all other school corporations in the county. Instead of equalizing educational opportunity for rural and town children of the county, it left conditions exactly as they were previous to the passage of the law.

The Thirty-Fifth General Assembly made some changes in

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<sup>48</sup>Acts of the 34th G. A., Chap. 146, Sec. 1.



the general tuition law which were aimed to solve the problem of the county high school, but the changes did no good.<sup>49</sup> The Thirty-seventh General Assembly further amended the law, enacting a compromise agreed upon by both the friends of the high school and its enemies.<sup>50</sup>

The new law was known as the refund law and operated as follows: If a child attended a high school and resided at home, but did not attend the county high school, the school corporation where the child resided paid the tuition for such child. If, at the end of the school year, it was found that fewer pupils attended the county high school from the district where the child resided than were entitled to attend under the county high school apportionment, then the school corporation where such child resided was entitled to be reimbursed from the county high school funds for the tuition so paid, not exceeding in the aggregate an amount equal to the taxes contributed by such district to the county high school funds. This legislation was proposed by Dr. C. O. Sones, H. E. Ilsley and J. W. Morris of Panora to save the high school from being abolished. The refund system was successful, but it, in reality, reduced the county high school to a local institution.

From September, 1916, until September, 1920, three men served as principal: Lester Shepherd, 1916-17; G. E. Thorpe, 1917-18; and August Griesel, 1918-20. These were four years of comparative quiet so far as the development of a school program was concerned, since this was the period in which the United States was engaged in the World War.

At this time, it might be well to record a word concerning the place which the Guthrie County High School filled in the great conflict. Almost all of the boys who entered the services from in or near Panora were graduates, or had been students, of the high school. Major General Charles Saltzman, now chairman of the Federal Radio Commission, was a graduate in the class of 1889; Earl P. Tucker and J. E. Tucker, both of the class of 1909, were first lieutenants; Percy Haughtelin, class of 1906, was also a first lieutenant; and Floyd Richey a second lieutenant. It has been impossible to secure a complete record of the war

<sup>49</sup>Acts of the 35th G. A., Chap. 239.

<sup>50</sup>*ibid.*, Chap. 240.

service of Guthrie County High School boys. Very likely others besides those named held offices of responsibility. It is certain that one honored graduate, Frank Grubb, class of 1912, was killed in France under circumstances indicating unusual heroism.

During Mr. Griesel's two years, one change was made in the extra-curricular activities that was a decided departure from the former routine. The Junior-Senior Contest, so long an important function,<sup>51</sup> was discontinued and the school became a member of the Iowa High School Declamatory Association.

In September, 1920, William W. Ballard came to Panora as the fifteenth and last principal of the Guthrie County High School. In the period of years of service to this institution, his was longest next to that of Mr. Ilsley. At this time there were on the faculty eight teachers including the principal. Physical Training for both boys and girls, Manual Training, Home Economics, Agriculture and Normal Training were included in the curriculum. The course of study was not materially changed during this administration. School routine flowed along smoothly with an average enrollment of 125 over the period. During this time the school took quite an active part in extra-curricular work, including declamatory contests, football, baseball and music. In 1929 a junior student, Maxine Culbertson, won the state contest in soprano solo at Iowa City, and in 1928 the baseball team was runner-up in the state tournament at Ames. Instead of the more advanced agricultural courses, normal training was added under the law of 1911.<sup>52</sup> During the second year of Mr. Ballard's administration, the enrollment was 150.<sup>53</sup> A study of the yearly record of the school from 1920-26 shows that there was a gradually decreasing student body. A marked decrease occurred when the school district of Yale added the eleventh and twelfth grades to their high school. This left the county high school as serving only Panora and her adjacent territory.

In 1926 the board of trustees suggested that they meet with the board of directors of the independent district of Panora to arrange some way whereby the county high school might be taken over, making it a part of the local system. But the Panora

<sup>51</sup>See p. 47.

<sup>52</sup>Acts of the 37th G. A., Chap. 131.

<sup>53</sup>Filed with the county auditor of Guthrie County. School year 1921-22.

board made no move to co-operate in the matter, and the question was dropped for the time. The total enrollment of the high school was now reduced to slightly more than 100, where it remained until the school was closed in 1930.

On June 2, 1930, at a special election called by the board of supervisors, after proper petitioning, the people of Guthrie County voted to abolish the county high school. According to Section 4095 of the Code of 1929, the board of trustees were permitted to operate the high school for a period of one year. In this period no move was made on the part of Panora to assume control and operation, and on the twenty-fifth of May, 1931, the school closed its doors. On June 2, 1931, the board of trustees held the final meeting and turned the property and all financial responsibility over to the board of supervisors. There were assets on hand, including tuition and taxes due, about \$12,000, with an outstanding indebtedness, including tuition refunds and outstanding current bills, of about \$3,000.

The board of supervisors appointed Charles Young, the county superintendent of schools, and Orlo Knapp, county auditor, as a committee to settle all outstanding county high school business. The disposition of the grounds, buildings and equipment, however, was left in the hands of the supervisors. This property was finally sold to the Panora independent school district for the sum of \$5,000. No final disposition has been made of the cash balance. Up to the present time it has been impossible to satisfactorily adjust this matter. By some it is claimed that this money should be returned to the districts who paid it as tuition; others hold that it should be redistributed to the nine independent districts of the county that had never been subject to the refund law; and still others claim that it should revert to the general fund of the county. At the present time, there is pending in the District Court of Guthrie County a case brought by the Panora independent school district and the Cass Township school district against the county board of supervisors which should decide the question.

R. A. Peet, Guthrie County representative to the Forty-fifth General Assembly, 1933, introduced a bill which was enacted into a law, striking from the Code all legislation concerning county high schools (Acts of the 45th G. A., Chap. 63).



TABLE A

Principals of the Guthrie County High School, 1876-1931

1876—	
January 1 to June 1.....	M. M. Wagner
1876-78.....	F. C. Wildes
1878-79—	
Six months.....	A. B. Collins
Two months.....	M. M. Wagner
1879-83.....	Richard D. Jones
1883-87.....	William G. Ray
1887-88.....	Rev. F. M. Elliott
1888-94.....	Andrew W. McPherson
1894-98.....	Lee M. Swindler
1898-1900.....	Francis E. Lenoher
1900-04.....	Benjamin F. Findley
1904-16.....	Harry E. Ilsley
1916-17.....	Lester Shepherd
1917-18.....	G. E. Thorpe
1918-20.....	August Griesel
1920-31.....	William W. Ballard

TABLE B

GUTHRIE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL  
Course of Study, 1876-77<sup>54</sup>

	Preparatory Department	
<i>First Term</i>	<i>Second Term</i>	<i>Third Term</i>
Reading	Physiology	Physiology
English Grammar	English Grammar	English Grammar
Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Modern Geography
Algebra	Algebra	Algebra
	Regular Course	
	Science, Mathematics, Languages	
	First Year	
<i>First Term</i>	<i>Second Term</i>	<i>Third Term</i>
Natural Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	Chemistry
Geometry	Geometry	Geometry
German or Latin	German or Latin	German or Latin
	A Physiology Lecture every three weeks	
	Second Year	
Chemistry	Chemistry	Geology, or English
Trigonometry	Trigonometry	Lit.
General History, or French or Greek	General History, or French or Greek	Latin Prose Comp.
German or Latin	German or Latin	General History, or French or Greek
		German or Latin

<sup>54</sup>S. B. Maxwell, *Centennial History of Guthrie County, Iowa*, 1876.

Third Year		
Geology, or English Lit.	Astronomy, or Eng- lish Lit.	Astronomy, or Eng- lish Lit.
Latin Prose Comp.	Latin Prose Comp.	Latin Prose Comp.
Rhetoric, or French or Greek	Rhetoric, or French or Greek	Constitution of U. S., or French or Greek
German or Latin	German or Latin	German or Latin
Fourth Year		
Zoology, or Botany	Zoology, or Botany	Civil Government
Latin Prose Comp.	Latin Prose Comp.	Botany, or Ancient Geography
Physical Geography, or French or Greek	Physical Geography, or French or Greek	Moral Philosophy, or French or Greek
German or Latin	German or Latin	German or Latin

TABLE C

Attendance at the Guthrie County High School by Townships  
for the School Year 1930-31

Baker Township.....	None
Bear Grove Township.....	None
Beaver Township.....	None
Cass Township.....	85
Dodge Township.....	None
Grant Township.....	None
Highland Township.....	None
Jackson Township.....	5
Orange Township.....	None
Penn Township.....	None
Richland Township.....	None
Seeley Township.....	None
Stuart Township.....	None
Thompson Township.....	None
Union Township.....	None
Valley Township.....	5
Victory Township.....	10

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