

Greenville School District Through the Years

Before 1865, the schools of Greenville consisted of two rooms on the east side of town in a building located where the Lutheran Church now stands on Clinton Street, and two rooms on the west side of town in a building at 21 North High Street. These schools were presided over by four female teachers.

In 1865 efforts were made toward the erection of a building known as the Union School. A building committee was appointed that year but the school was not completed until 1867-68. The Union School, a three story 11 room brick structure, was built on the future site of the Penn High School at the corner of Main Street and Penn Avenue.



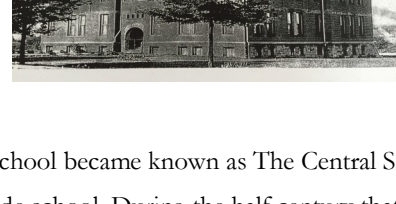
The Union School building which later became the Central School

The Greenville School District was established in 1867 and in 1878 the first ward school was erected on West Main Street on the north corner of High Street and Main at a cost of \$10,000. The building construction was approved at \$7,839 while the stone work cost was \$1,420. This school building was called the West Side School, renamed the Margaret Brown School after a prominent and dedicated teacher of the time. The building eventually became St. Michael's School and is still in use as a Catholic elementary school.



The West Side School which later became the Margaret Brown School and then St. Michael's School

In 1892, a new school building was needed and the Columbia School was built at the site of the current East Elementary School on Columbia Avenue.



The Columbia School

After the construction of the Columbia and West Side School, the Union School became known as The Central School. For many years the Central School served the community as a high school and a grade school. During the half century that it stood, many changes took place in Greenville's educational system. By 1900 the set-up included four high school grades and eight grammar grades.



The Washington School

The Washington School, the first school established specifically as a high school, was built in 1904 and is currently being used as an apartment building on South Mercer Street. Prior to this time, high school students started in the West Side School, moved to the Central Union School, then to the Washington School. The school enrollment increased and a variety of courses were added to the curriculum. In 1915, the first domestic science classes were added and the first boy's and girl's basketball teams were organized.

When the Central School was razed in 1916 in order to build a larger high school, one stone bearing the legend "A.D. 1866" was saved and built into the foundation of the new building. On August 22, 1917, the corner stone of Penn High School was laid with due ceremony. In the spring of 1919, the first commencement exercises were held in the auditorium. This served as a Junior and Senior High School until the need for a new building became necessary after nearly 40 years of service to Greenville students.



Penn Junior Senior High School

In the mid 1920s, the rising population of Greenville saw the need for two elementary schools. Hence the addition of the West Side and Hempfield Elementary Schools. In the mid 1950s the population explosion in the Greenville area forced an expansion of the Hempfield building with an additional six classrooms, office space, teachers' rooms, a nurse's room, and a kitchen. The heating system was also revamped. The bond issue for the addition and renovations amounted to \$200,000. Both West Side and Hempfield took on many new students during the two years that East Side school was in the process of construction. The West Side Elementary School was closed in the early 1980's and became a small business incubator. West Side students were then sent to Hempfield Elementary.

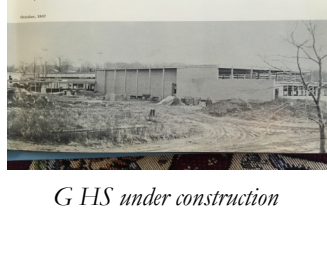


West Side Elementary School

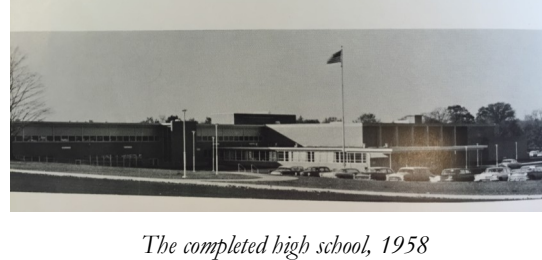


Hempfield Elementary School

The next major addition in the Greenville School District plant came with the construction of the high school. It is located on 34 acres of land at the present site of 9 Donation Road. Although the need for a new high school other than what was Penn High had long been recognized by some, it wasn't until 1958 that the dream was realized. There had been pressure for an addition to the Penn Avenue building in order to house both the junior and senior high schools. However, the land became unavailable and this, among other reasons, turned plans to an entirely new building. A bond issue in the amount of \$1,750,000 was floated to cover construction costs.



GHS under construction



The completed high school, 1958

In 1963 the East Side Elementary School was erected where the Columbia School once stood at a cost of \$835,000. There are 18 classrooms at East Side for grades one through six with three sections for each grade. In addition, there are two kindergarten rooms, a library and an all-purpose gymnasium-cafeteria. The building was constructed of entirely soundproof walls. A quote from the *Record Argus* at the time of the dedication states, "Perhaps in another half century though, even this modern school will have passed its period of usefulness and another generation in another day will look to it as a sign of the past as they struggle to keep pace with the changing times."



East Elementary School

Built for an enrollment of 534 students, the new high school quickly demonstrated errors in pupil population projections. One of the early inadequacies discovered was the lack of cafeteria space. After school activities also overtaxed the school's gymnasium so an addition soon was necessary to meet the needs of a growing student body. The much needed building expansion was completed for the 1967 school year.



Construction begins



The dark roof is the original part of the school and the light roof is the addition.



GHS in 1967

The last major renovation to the district's physical plants was again at the high school in 1997. The 1997-98 renovations include science labs, computer labs and a new cafeteria. A musical suite, including a new band and choir room were added to the west side of the school. The updates also included re-vamping the electrical wiring to accommodate the new labs and a media center was designed where the cafeteria once operated.



GHS in 2015