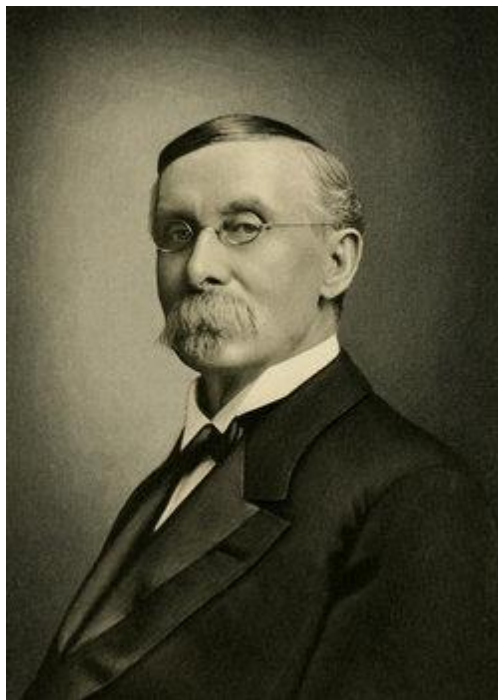


# West Aurora Schools

## Frank H. Hall

(Superintendent 1868-1875 & 1887-1890)



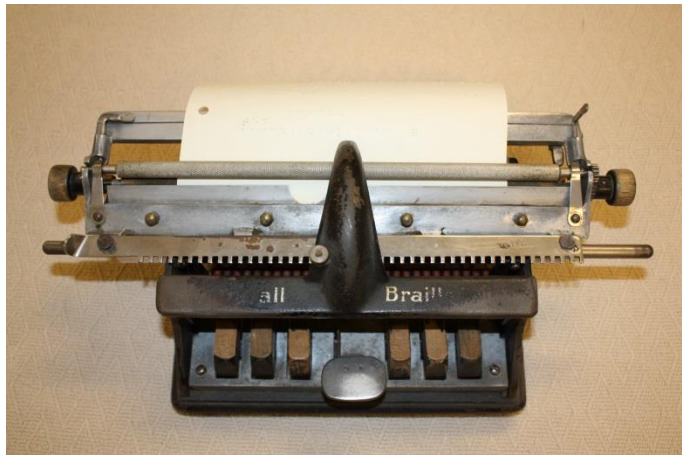
Frank Haven Hall



Frank H. Hall Elementary School  
2001 Heather Drive, Aurora  
Dedicated 1961



**Sugar Grove general store where Hall worked and lived upstairs**



**Braille Typewriter invented by Hall 1892**



**West Aurora Cemetery**

## **Profile of Frank H. Hall**

**Frank H. Hall (1841-1911) was a soldier, educator, businessman, inventor and author. He was born on February 9, 1841 in Mechanic Falls, Maine.**

**Following his formal education in Maine, he served as hospital steward at Edward's Ferry during the Civil War. After his discharge from the service, he became principal of Towle Academy in Maine.**

**In 1866, he left Maine and came to Illinois to become principal of the public school systems in Earlville, Sugar Grove, Petersburg and Waukegan.**

**He served as the second (1868-1875) and sixth (1887-1890) superintendent of the West Aurora Schools. He was instrumental in guiding the schools in a new direction and was respected throughout the country.**

**During his first term, Hall visited every home in the district to encourage parents to keep their children in school. Many older students left school because they had taken all of the subjects offered. So, the Superintendent developed an advanced course of study for these students. As a result, students began to return to the school. Five would comprise the first class to graduate from the West Aurora Schools in 1870.**

**During his tenure, the high school was accredited by Chicago University, forerunner to the University of Chicago. It was the first three-year high school to receive that honor.**

**Hall left Aurora to lead the Sugar Grove Normal and Industrial School which offered the traditional courses of study, as well as hands-on classes in dairying, raising stock, homemaking and the use and repair of equipment.**

**While in Sugar Grove, he lived above the general store. In addition to administering the school, he operated the store and the town's boarding house, served as Sugar Grove's postmaster and township treasurer, owned a lumberyard and creamery, and often preached sermons on Sundays. Hall remained at the school until his return to Aurora in 1887.**

**He was welcomed back by the citizens of West Aurora with great enthusiasm. Under his guidance, a new school was built on the northwest corner of Pennsylvania and Illinois Avenue. The school was named the Pennsylvania Avenue School (later renamed for Nancy L. Hill).**

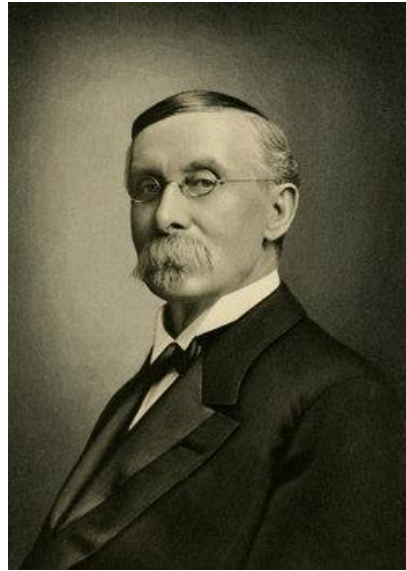
Hall left the district in 1890 to become Superintendent of the Illinois State School for the Blind in Jacksonville. In 1892, he invented the Braille typewriter. Interestingly, Hall never patented the typewriter because he felt “profit should not sully the cause of serving the blind.”

Hall recalled meeting Helen Keller at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. She was overcome with gratitude to Hall for enriching her life with his inventions. Hall’s retelling of their meeting always brought tears to his eyes.

Hall and his wife Sybil returned to Aurora in 1902. They were the parents of three children.

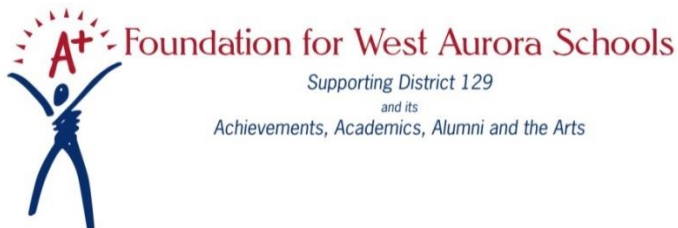
In the spring of 1910, he was diagnosed with diabetes and tuberculosis. He died in January 1911 and is buried in the West Aurora Cemetery in Aurora.

Sources for this profile: West Aurora Schools, Aurora Beacon-News, Frances Jean O’Brien’s “A Study of Aurora Schools (1835-1935),” and Patsy Mighell Paxton’s book [Sin-Qua-Sip](#). The photo of the general store in Sugar Grove is courtesy of Patsy Mighell Paxton. The photo of the gravestone is from Find-A-Grave and the photo of the braille typewriter is in the public domain. The West Aurora Buildings and Grounds Facilities Inventory Report recorded the date for the construction of the school as 1959. The cornerstone on the building uses the year 1960. A February 8, 1961 article in the Aurora Beacon-News reported that the school was dedicated to Frank H. Hall in 1961. This profile, completed in 2016, is courtesy of the A+ Foundation for West Aurora Schools and the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley.



**Frank Haven Hall**

In 2016, the A+ Foundation for West Aurora Schools and the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley collaborated in the development of biographical profiles of those for whom District 129 schools are named. Financial support for the project was provided by the following Special Friends of West Aurora School District 129: Sherry Eagle, Gary and Mary Jewel, Neal and Mary Clark Ormond, Char and Frank Voris, and Brent and Jean Wadsworth. The research, writing and editing of these profiles were courtesy of the Community Foundation and its President Emeritus Sharon Stredde, Research Associate Judith Iverson and Past Chairman of the Board Neal Ormond III.



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