

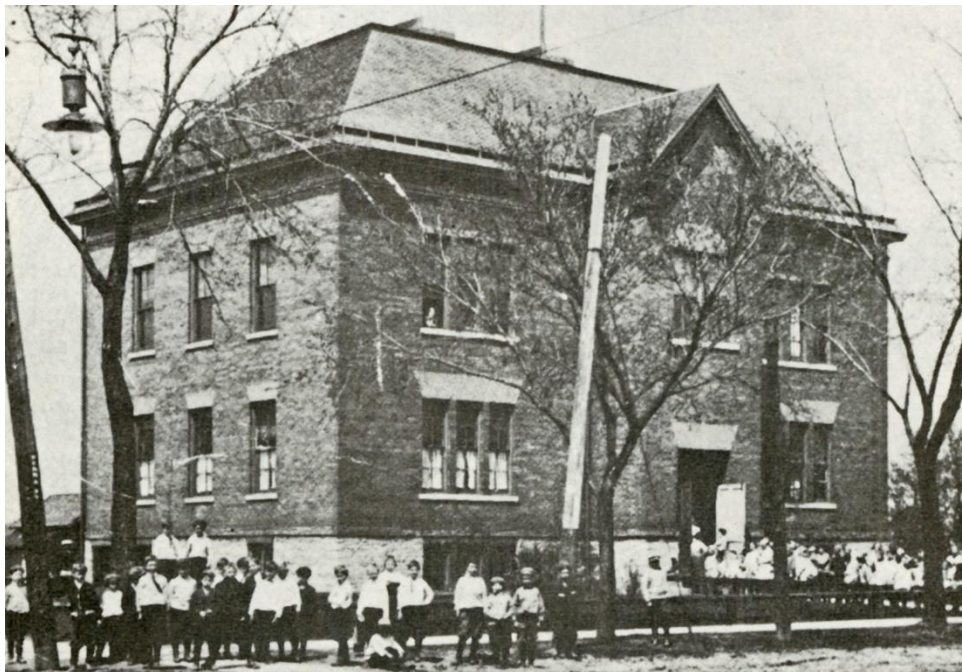
# West Aurora Schools

## Nancy L. Hill

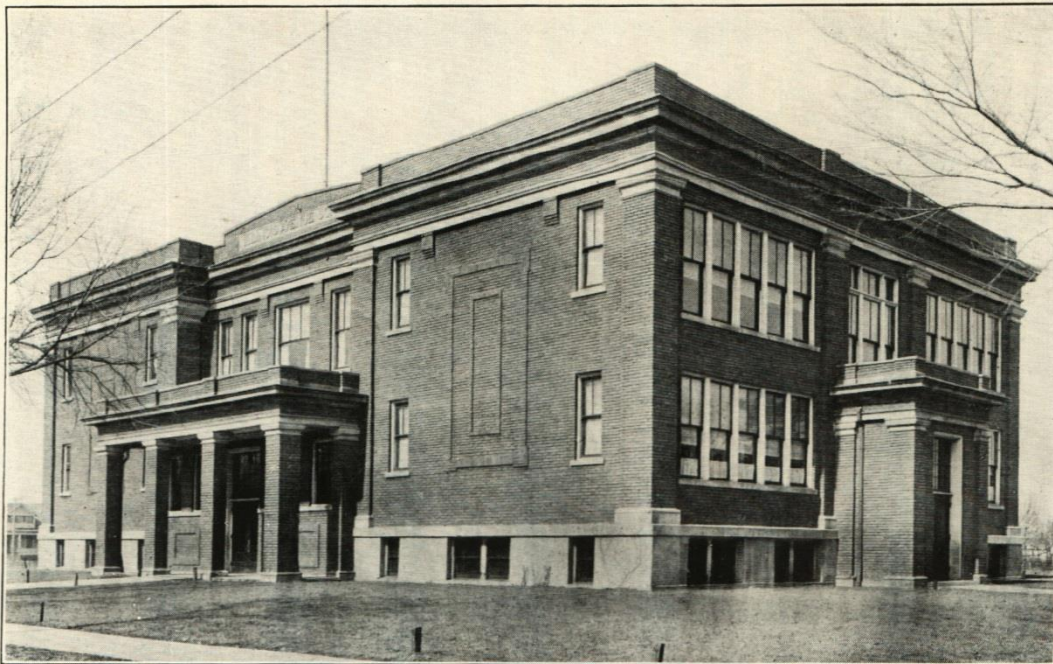
(West Aurora Teacher & Principal 1902-1928)



Nancy L. Hill



Pennsylvania Avenue School  
Pennsylvania Avenue  
Constructed 1888



REPORT OF BOARD OF EDUCATION

ILLINOIS AVE. SCHOOL

**Illinois Avenue School**  
**Formerly Pennsylvania Avenue School**  
**Renamed Illinois Avenue School 1913**



**Nancy L. Hill Elementary School**  
**724 Pennsylvania Avenue, Aurora**  
**Formerly Pennsylvania Avenue School**  
**Formerly Illinois Avenue School**  
**Renamed for Nancy Hill 1928**



Nancy Louise Hill

Elmwood Cemetery in Yorkville

## Profile of Nancy L. Hill

Nancy Louise Hill (1868-1928) was born July 27, 1868, in Yorkville, Illinois. She was the daughter of Thomas P. and Emma Haigh Hill. Miss Hill was the youngest of six children. Her siblings were William Hill, Emma Hill, Frederick Hill, Mary Hill Hobbs and Arthur Hill.

After teaching in the grade school at Yorkville, she went to Winona, Minnesota, where she graduated from Winona Normal. She then returned to teach in the Yorkville grade school and later attended Knox College from which she was graduated. Later she returned to take the position as principal of the Yorkville High School.

In 1902, Hill began her teaching career in Aurora at Oak Street School (later named the Mary A. Todd School). She was a teacher at the school for seven years and then served as its principal for nineteen years.

When the Mary A. Todd School was destroyed by fire in 1927, some of the pupils took up quarters in the high school. She was principal of this group at the time of her death.

Hill died of a heart attack on May 26, 1928 at her home on Downer Place. She was sixty years old.

Two weeks before her death, the board of education announced that Hill would be principal of the new J.H. Freeman School in the Evanslawn Addition. She was described as a fine teacher and "a wonderful character builder."

Nancy Hill was one of the best known school teachers in the State of Illinois. During her many years as teacher in the West Side Schools, she taught thousands of pupils.

She was highly respected by pupils and parents. She brought out the best in the boys and girls and took a deep interest in their college work after they graduated from high school.

She was once considered for the position of superintendent of the West Side Schools. This honor was made in recognition of her "fine capacities and disposition." However, she did not seek or wish to have the position.

During the summers, Miss Hill continued her education at the University of Wisconsin, Columbia University and Oberlin College. She was also much interested in music.

She was survived by two brothers, Fred Hill of Sycamore, and Arthur Hill of Yorkville.

The funeral was held at the First Baptist Church in Aurora. She was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Yorkville. West Side Schools were closed on the day of the funeral.

Pallbearers included West Aurora Superintendent James Smith, West Aurora High School Principal A. A. Rea and West High coach Ralph Fletcher.

### **Farewell Nan Hill**

**(Beacon-News Article – May 27, 1928)**

Nancy Hill - "Nan" Hill as she was to everybody, when she was not "Hillie," has gone on to the land where they continue the education which she helped to further on earth. Nan died after an illness of but a half hour early yesterday morning, the news being received with tears and sorrow by thousands of people. Nan had done about all that a human being can do to

live a good life. She had been ideal in her own family and she had been a most remarkable teacher in the schools. She loved to sing and was a member of several singing groups. Her last note to the society department was in regard to the junior high program at West High Friday night of last week - one of her nice, jolly human notes, for Nan was human in every sense. Late Monday night she came back to the Business and Professional Woman's Club meeting for the first time since an illness which she suffered - the same sort of illness which caused her death - a faulty heart action. She was asked to read the collect - a mark of honor accorded people. And, while it has been found since her death that it was an effort to read it, she did read it well. This was Nan Hill's farewell to her friends in the club - dear "Hillie." One is very sure that after her fine and full life she has gone on "straight forward and unafraid" to the next work which she will find to do and will do with all her heart.

### **Death of Miss Hill**

**(Beacon-News Editorial – May 28, 1928)**

The sudden death of Miss Nannie Hill, who had just been named principal of the new Freeman School which is now being built, came as a shock to the community.

On the west side there are hundreds of young people who will treasure memories of the Miss Hill they knew as principal of the Oak Street, later the Mary Todd School. She was a splendid teacher but more than that a sympathetic and understanding woman. It was recognition of her fine capacities and disposition that won for her the suggestion some years ago that she be made superintendent of schools. The position she did not seek and did not wish, so friends did not insist upon pressing her cause. But that she would have filled the position with distinction and general satisfaction they had never a doubt.

Mrs. Fern Detweiler, who as a member of the west side board and a mother of children who attended the west side schools, came into association with Miss Hill and pays her this deserved tribute:

*"During all the years that Miss Hill served in our schools, she never faltered nor shirked. There were many times when she must have felt discouraged over conditions that seemed adverse and work that seemed futile but thru it all she maintained a spirit of strength and optimism that kept her associates and coworkers enthusiastic and efficient. When, as chairman of the teachers' committee on the school board, I conferred frequently with her about our schools, our teachers, our pupils, and our community as a whole, I found her absolutely unselfish and just and generous toward all -*

***seeking always for the good and overlooking the faults - upholding throughout the district she served a morale which only so strong a personality could do with such apparent ease and absence of conflict.***

***“Miss Hill could have received a far greater monetary compensation in other cities. She has had many offers that were tempting, but she chose to serve this community, and the services she rendered are the kind for which there is, on earth, no adequate pay.***

***“Dr. Henry Van Dyke’s recent tribute ‘To the Unknown Teacher’ comes to mind as eminently fitting for such as Miss Hill:-***

***“ I sing the praise of the unknown teacher. Great generals win campaigns, but it is the unknown soldier who wins the war. Famous educators plan new systems of pedagogy, but it is the unknown teacher who delivers and guides the young. He lives in obscurity and contends with hardship. For him no trumpets blare, no chariots wait, no golden decorations are decreed. He keeps the watch along the borders of darkness and makes the attack on the trenches of ignorance and folly. Patient in his daily duty, he strives to conquer the evil powers which are the enemies of youth. He awakens sleeping spirits. He quickens the indolent, encourages the eager, and steadies the unstable. He communicates his own joy in learning and shares with boys and girls the best treasures of his mind. He lights many candles which in later years shine back to cheer him. This is his reward. Knowledge may be gained from books; but the love of knowledge is transmitted only by personal contact. No one has deserved better of the republic than the unknown teacher. No one is more worthy to be enrolled in a democratic aristocracy, king of himself and servant of mankind.”***

Sources for this profile: West Aurora Schools and the Aurora Beacon-News. The photos of the gravestone and the young Nancy Hill are from Find-A-Grave. The West Aurora Buildings and Grounds Facilities Inventory Report recorded the date for the initial construction of the school as 1888. The 1927-1928 Annual Report of the Board of Education stated that the Illinois Avenue School was renamed in honor of Nancy L. Hill after the addition to the building was completed in November 1928. This profile, completed in 2016, is courtesy of the A+ Foundation for West Aurora Schools and the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley.



**Nancy L. Hill**

**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.**

