

# West Aurora Schools

## Gertrude Scott Smith

(West Aurora Teacher & Administrator 1900-1946)



Gertrude Scott Smith



Gertrude Scott Smith Elementary School  
1332 Robinwood Drive, Aurora  
Constructed 1963

## Photos of Gertrude Scott Smith





**Gertrude Scott Smith at West Aurora High School**



**Kaneville Cemetery**



**Daughters of the American Revolution  
(Plaque affixed to Smith's gravestone)**

## **Profile of Gertrude Scott Smith**

**Gertrude Scott Smith (1880–1958)** was born in Aurora, Illinois. She was the daughter of Lewis K. and Mary Ende Scott. Her father was born in New York and was described as a “prominent merchant” in Aurora.

Her mother was born in Illinois. Mary and Lewis had four children – Gertrude, Edith, Helena “Nell” and George.

Edith was a reporter for the Aurora Beacon-News. Helena “Nell” married Edward Cooper. Their daughter Mary Lou Cooper married Frank K. Burgess, grandson of the founder of the Burgess-Norton Manufacturing Company in Geneva, Illinois. Both Frank and Mary Lou Burgess were prominent civic leaders in the Geneva community.

Gertrude Smith was a graduate of West Aurora High School. She furthered her education at Northern Illinois Teachers College (now Northern Illinois University) and the University of Chicago.

She married Burton Smith in 1906. He was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin in 1878. The couple resided with her parents at 256 Galena Street (now Boulevard) in Aurora. Mr. Smith was a salesman in the printing business.

Mrs. Smith taught for School District 129 for forty-six years. Her first teaching assignment was at Oak Street School in 1900 (later named Mary A. Todd School). She then was appointed principal of the South Lake Street School (later named Abraham Lincoln School). This school closed in 2008.

She was transferred to West Aurora High School to teach mathematics. While at West High, she served as assistant principal and dean of girls. In spite of assuming these administrative responsibilities, she continued to teach advanced courses in mathematics.

Mr. Smith died in 1943. After her husband’s death, Mrs. Smith’s residence was listed as 433 Oak Avenue.

Gertrude Smith is described as having had "an indomitable faith and belief in most everybody, and this was the source of her wise and friendly counsel that inspired, encouraged and endeared her many students."

**She retired in 1946. An article in the Aurora Economist reported that Mrs. Smith “exhibits no signs of weariness even though she has taught thousands of students throughout her career.” She was described by the publication as being “genial and understanding.”**

**Smith was an active member of the Aurora Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. She also maintained memberships in the American Association of University Women, Woman’s Club of Aurora and New England Congregational Church in Aurora.**

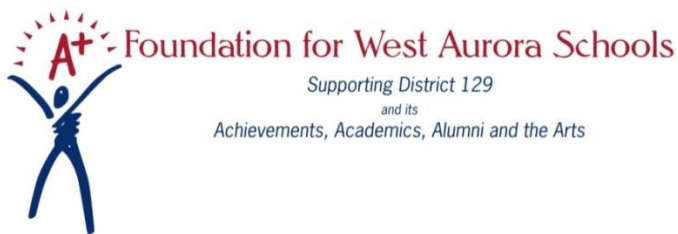
**She died in January 1958 and is buried next to her husband in the Kaneville Cemetery.**

**Sources for this profile: West Aurora Schools, Ancestry, Aurora Economist, Aurora Beacon-News and the Geneva History Museum. The photos of the gravestone and DAR plaque are courtesy of the Kaneville Cemetery Association. The West Aurora Buildings and Grounds Facilities Inventory Report recorded the date for the construction of the school as 1963. A profile of Gertrude Smith prepared by the West Aurora Schools in the early 2000s indicated that she began her teaching career in the West Aurora Schools in 1900. An Aurora Beacon-News article published at the time of her retirement reported that her teaching career began in the West Aurora Schools in 1906. Since the West Aurora Schools would have had access to the employment records of its teachers, this profile will reflect the date recorded by the district. Since Mrs. Smith’s employment records no longer exist, the date cannot be verified. This profile, completed in 2016, is courtesy of the A+ Foundation for West Aurora Schools and the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley.**



**Gertrude Scott Smith**

**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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