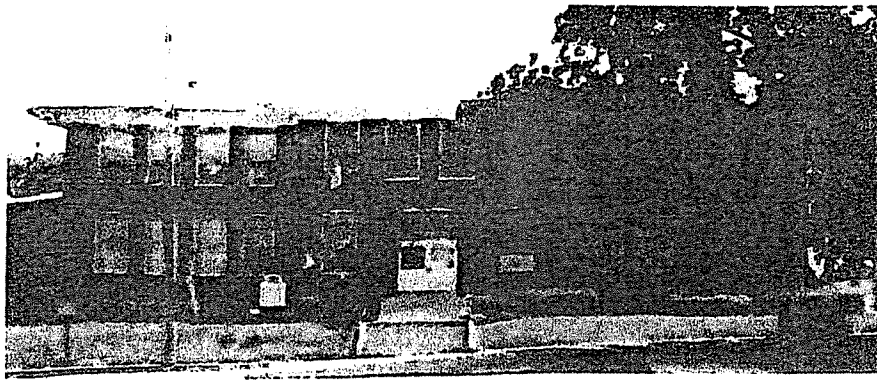
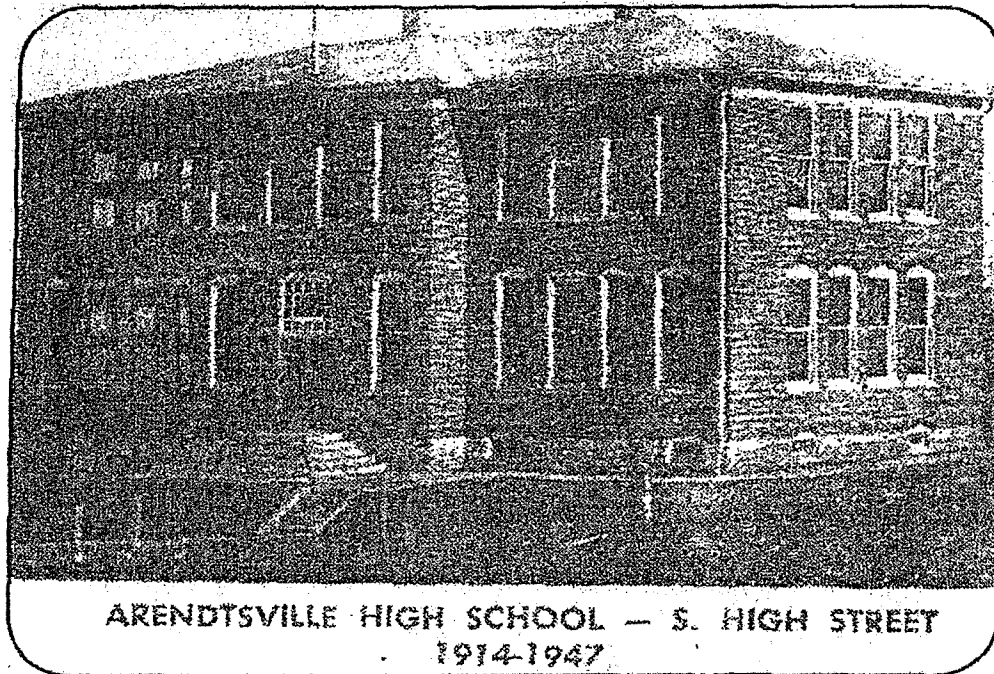


**A History
of the
🍏 Arendtsville 🍏
Vocational
High School**



Arendtsville Vocational High School



Gettysburg Times Article - March 30, 2007

by Tom Ford

Well for today's column I will provide a bit of history of Arendtsville Vocational High School, graciously provided to me by Elaine Taylor Ecker, a member of the last graduating class there in 1947. The history appears to be compiled by Charles Smith. The 60th anniversary of the alumni of this wonderful institution will be held June 2 of this year at Bendersville Fire Hall. Here goes....

The High School tuition system prompted civic pride in Arendtsville and Biglerville to provide such a home for education. The first to make the plunge was Arendtsville, when three of our young men, Mr. Charles Raffensperger, Mr. Ira Lady, and Mr. George Rice, sponsored the proposition and secured the signatures to the petition for the establishment of a two-year high school in 1911. In 1912, Guyon Wier-man was the first and only graduate of the two-year program. With enrollment growing including high school pupils, the classes soon outgrew the second floor of the grade building and older pupils were moved to the second floor of the fire house on South High Street, amid plans to construct a new high school building and expand the course to three years.

In 1914 the people voted for a new high school building. The school board, being interested in the welfare of the children, with crowded conditions existing and no funds available, floated a \$5,000 bond issue. The two-story building at the end of South High Street, less the auditorium, resulted. The school grew rapidly, and the two year course was extended to a three year one. This continued from 1915 until 1917 when the school evolved into a vocation school. The class of 1915 the possibilities of establishing a Rural Community Vocational School at Arendtsville. The board was impressed with the idea and a committee was immediately appointed to investigate the matter. This movement for the Vocational School was championed by the Assistant County Superintendent, George M. Rice, D.C. Jacobs, and the PTA organization. The PTA organization was very active in educating the people of the community as to the possibilities of a vocational school.

In 1917 Butler and Franklin Townships formed a jointure with Arendtsville to establish the Arendtsville Joint Vocational High School. The school opened its doors in September, 1917. Shortly after World War I, Mr. George Rice offered a suggestion to the PTA that an auditorium be built as a memorial to the soldiers who fought in that war. This lay dormant for several years, due largely to the failing health of the director. It was not until after Mr. Roy Diem became the new director that the auditorium project was completed.

In 1927 the contract between the jointure of Arendtsville, Butler and Franklin Township was renewed and again in 1937, and by 1938 the Arendtsville Vocation High School reached a peak enrolled of 118 students. The jointure was ended in 1941 when Franklin Township withdrew, although Butler Township and Arendtsville Borough continued the joint operation until the Upper Adams School district was formed in June of 1947.

Although the school was designed to meet the needs of a rural community and especially the needs of those who could not enter ordinary academic high school, it proved to be have one of the highest percentages in Adams County, of students who entered and graduated from institutions of higher learning.

During the year of 1917 the Smith-Hughes Bill was passed making available federal funds to schools teaching vocational agriculture and home economics to boys and girls in school. Pupils receiving this type of education would benefit for useful employment and to meet the need of persons at home.

The first teacher as head of the agriculture department was Brandon W. Wright at a salary of \$1,500 for nine months. Miss Miriam Weikert was elected head of the economics department at a salary of \$85.00 per month. Mr. Wright taught only three-fourths of a year and Miss Weikert two terms. Mr. William W. Wood was elected to replace Mr. Wright at a salary of \$1800 per nine-months. Miss Margaret E. Reigle and Miss Elenor Whipple were elected to replace Miss Weikert, but Miss Whipple were elected to replace Miss Weikert, but Miss Whipple only taught three months. A. Florence Love finished the year and remained there until 1921.

At a board meeting June 21, 1921, Mr. Edwin A. Rice was elected to teach vocational agriculture at a salary of \$2,000 per year. Miss Helen H. Hartley was elected to teach home-making at a salary of \$1,400 per year. At this time Miss Nellie B Woods was elected as an assistant to teach home-making.

The school was forced to close on June 1, 1947, and consolidate with Biglerville. The Biglerville school named was changed to Upper Adams Jointure. The school retained this name until 1961; since then it has been referred to as the Upper Adams School District.

I had chronicled some of those AVHS agriculture field trips in an earlier column, including the 8,300 mile trek that included the US, Canada, Mexico and Alaska.

Elaine also provided pages from her commencement program on May 26, 1947 which I show here. It list the board of education, faculty, class members and other items of interest - particularly the class colors of maroon and white, hmmm! It is also nice that the class gift to the school was an "automatic record player."

GRADUATION CLASS OF 1947

Class Motto

Live today; prepared for the future

Honor Roll

Valedictorian - Guy Fissel
Second honors - Sterling Singley, Gilbert
Lupp

National Honor Society

Ida Barbour, Guy Fissel, Gilbert Lupp,
Jean Garretson, Sterling Singley

Class Roll

John Allison, Charles Baker, Florence
Dillion, Robert Eicholtz, Guy Fissel, Leroy
Flickinger, Nancy Frederick, Jean
Garretson, Jane Guise, Eileen Hall, Robert
Hartzel, Elise Hykes, Cecelia Knouse,
William Lower, Gilbert Lupp, Mary
Mickley, Edith Miller, Mildred Price,
Sterling Singley, Elaine Taylor, Louise
Walter

High School

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With enrollment growing including the high school pupils, the classes soon outgrew the second floor of the grade building and older pupils were moved to the second floor of the fire house on S. High Street, amid plans to construct a new high school building and expand the course to three years.

In 1914 the people voted for a new high school building. The school board, being interested in the welfare of the children, with crowded conditions existing and no funds available, floated a \$5,000. bond issue. The two-story building at the end of S. High Street, less the auditorium, resulted. The school grew rapidly, and the two year course was extended to a three year one. This continued from 1915 until 1917 when the school evolved into a vocational school. The class of 1915 consisted of three members: Mrs. Mary Lady Garretson, Eva Jacobs and Olive Orner.

On November 4, 1915, at a regular meeting, the Arendtsville Borough school board listened to Mr. Edwin A. Rice, a student at that time of State College, explain the possibilities of establishing a Rural Community Vocational School at Arendtsville. The board was impressed with the idea and a committee was immediately appointed to investigate the matter. This movement for the Vocational School was championed by the Assistant County Superintendent, George M. Rice, D. C. Jacobs, and the PTA organization. The PTA organization was very active in educating the people of the community as to the possibilities of a vocational school.

In 1917 Butler and Franklin Townships formed a jointure with Arendtsville to establish the Arendtsville Joint Vocational High School. The school opened its doors in September, 1917. Shortly after World War I, Mr. George Rice offered a suggestion to the PTA that an auditorium be built as a memorial to the soldiers who fought in that war. This lay dormant for several years, due largely to the failing health of the director. It was not until after Mr. Roy Diem became the new director that the auditorium project was completed.

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Although the school was designed to meet the needs of a rural community and especially the needs of those who could not enter the ordinary academic high school, it proved to have one of the highest percentages in Adams County, of students who entered and graduated from institutions of higher learning.

EARLY HISTORY OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS IN ARENDTSVILLE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

An organization of rural children in Adams County about 1913 was the Adams County Boys and Girls Agricultural and Domestic League. The age range of the group was between nine and seventeen years of age. The motto "Improved Farming and Housekeeping" was the objective of this group. Contests were held in the courthouse in Gettysburg, and prizes were given to the boy and girl with the best project in his or her class. The club also exhibited agricultural products at the local schools in the county. The activity of this club probably had its influence on the establishment of the Arendtsville Vocational High School.

Since neither Franklin nor Butler Townships had a high school, it was thought wise to unite the three districts, which would lessen the burden of expenses on each district. The agreement was entered into by the different boards on the 12th day of March, 1917, and was binding for a period of ten years. The school was to be known as "The Arendtsville Vocational School" and the chief governing body consisted of three members from each district.*

During the year of 1917 the Smith-Hughes Bill was passed making available federal funds to schools teaching vocational agriculture and home economics to boys and girls in school. Pupils receiving this type of education would benefit for useful employment and to meet the need of persons at home.

The first teacher as head of the agriculture department was Brandon W. Wright at a salary of \$1500 for nine months. Miss Miriam Weikert was elected head of the home economics department at a salary of \$85.00 per month. Mr. Wright taught only three-fourths of a year and Miss Weikert two terms. Mr. Wm. W. Wood was elected to replace Mr. Wright at a salary of \$1800 per nine-months. Miss Margaret E. Riegle and Miss Elenor Whipple were elected to replace Miss Weikert, but Miss Whipple only taught three months. A. Florence Love finished the year and remained there until 1921.

At a board meeting June 21, 1921, Mr. Edwin A. Rice was elected to teach vocational agriculture at a salary of \$2000 per year. Miss Helen H. Hartley was elected to teach home-making at a salary of \$1400 per year. At this time Miss Nellie B. Woods was elected as an assistant to teach home-making.*

During these early years the vocational school was the only school of this type in the county. It offered an opportunity to boys and girls in the county to specialize in home economics and agriculture. The curriculum was taught as follows:

- First year— poultry, vegetable gardening, shop, general science and English
- Second year— farm crops, animal husbandry, shop, and the required academic subjects
- Third year— dairying, shop, chemistry, and academic subjects
- Fourth year— farm accounts, rural sociology, rural law, shop, and academic subjects

The curriculum for home economics consumed one-half day in teaching cooking, clothing, child care, interior decorating, and home planning. After 1946 a minimum of 250 minutes per week constituted an acceptable program.

During the first two years everybody in school took the vocational courses. Then during the third and fourth years the pupils could switch to full academic electives or remain in the vocational departments. According to Mrs. Larue (Hostetter Deardorff) Hoffman, the homemaking girls served dinners and sold home-roasted peanuts to earn money for camping trips during the summer. Mrs. Deardorff also allowed the girls to use her house as a place to practice home living for two weeks during their third year. During these two weeks they were required to hold different kinds of parties for the faculty and friends and also to keep the house clean. Mrs. Deardorff taught at Arendtsville from 1926 to 1942.

During the sixteen years that Mr. Ed Rice taught at Arendtsville he had about a dozen girls enrolled in the vocational agriculture classes. He often remarked that one of his outstanding students was a girl.

During the thirty years that Arendtsville operated as a vocational high school, boys and girls came from all directions in the county to attend this school and get the advantages of vocational courses. The students who graduated from this school were successful in all professions of life.

The school was forced by the State to close on June 1, 1947, and consolidate with Biglerville. The Biglerville school name was changed to Upper Adams Jointure. The school retained this name until 1961; since then it has been referred to as the Upper Adams School District.

CHARLES A. SMITH

*Arendtsville School Board Secretary's Ledger

The worth of a faculty is measured by the achievements of its pupils. Great credit goes to the following members of the Arendtsville Vocational School, which in its 36 years, prepared persons who became clergymen, educators, bankers, lawyers, doctors, an ambassador, surgeons, laboratory technicians, industrialists, contractors and builders, railroaders, mechanics, businessmen, agriculturalists, fruitgrowers, and farmers.

THE YEARS

History of The Arendtsville Vocational School Band

Our schools were without a band or an orchestra between 1920 and 1930. In November of 1930 ^{Ed Rice} the writer made a trip to Hanover to interview Prof. Stenger concerning the organization of a school band. Mr. Nelson, a representative of the Pan American Band Equipment Company, was with Mr. Stenger at the time of the interview. The results of this conference were reported to the school board and permission was granted to Mr. Taylor and the writer to attempt to organize a school band with the proviso that the band, if organized, should not carry with it any financial obligations to be met by the school board.

A community meeting was called which resulted in the organization of a band of 25 pieces. Mr. Stenger was selected as the director and the writer as his assistant. The band flourished, taking on a few new members during the year. At the end of the first year the band had a membership of 37. At this time the band filled its most noteworthy engagement by furnishing music for the Vocational Program at the State Farm Products Show.

A change in the management of the band was effected at the beginning of the school term of 1933-1934, when a committee of three was appointed by the school board to manage the affairs of the band. This committee was composed of a member of the school board, a member of the faculty and a parent of a band member.

The committee did away with the old management, chiefly because of the assumption that it was too expensive, and appointed Miss Regina Oyler, the music instructor, as director of the band. This arrangement lasted until the fall of 1934 when Mr. Harner was procured to lead the band and the writer was again appointed assistant. This arrangement holds at the present time. Our band at present consists of thirty-five pieces and a beginners' class of ten.

The band has rehearsed during the school year ever since its organization. Through vacations the band was held together by evening rehearsals and by filling numerous engagements at festivals, reunions, and picnics. At the time of organization some of the instruments for the band were collected from members of the old defunct Arendtsville Band, while others purchased their own instruments. The band has purchased, since its organization, a bass, a baritone, an alto, six clarinets, two snare drums and numerous pieces of smaller equipment. In all, the band is and has been a going organization, paying its own way even to the extent of paying the salary of its instructor.

E. A. RICE

1936

ARENDSVILLE HISTORY CONCLUDED

The Arendtsville Vocational School opened its doors in September, 1917, with George M. Rice as a director, which position he held until his death in 1921. Shortly after World War I, Mr. George M. Rice offered a suggestion to the PTA organization that an auditorium be built as a Memorial to the soldiers who fought in that war. This lay dormant for several years, due largely to the failing health of the director. It was not until after Mr. Roy Diem became the new director that the auditorium project was completed.

Scholastically, our school maintained a very high standard. Although the school was designed to meet the needs of a rural community and especially the needs of those who could not enter the ordinary academic high school, our high school remained second to none in Adams County in the percentage of students who entered and graduated from Institutions of higher learning.

Harold E. Taylor.