



Ritenour...

Our First 132 Years

Ritenour... Our First 132 Years
Patricia Lewis Williamson

Cover design by
Rebecca J. Courtois
Class of 1978
Ritenour Senior High

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Ritenour School District
2420 Woodson Road
Overland, Missouri
63114

Author's Note

In the summer of 1976, the bicentennial year, David Bell, then a newly elected board member, suggested that it would be appropriate for the school district to commission some sort of plaque with the names of all community residents who had served on Ritenour's board of education.

The page-by-page search of musty minute books dating back to 1878 began as a chore, but soon became a labor of love. Who could resist the appeal of such fascinating bits of information as the notation that the board bills in November 1913 included ten cents for mousetraps and five cents for cheese!

The original task was completed and the plaques were hung, but reading through hundreds of crumbling pages of handwritten entries had convinced me that the books had a great deal more to offer than the names of the 90 men and women who have served as board members.

And so, over a period of several months in 1976 and 1977, Ritenour's history took shape on paper. A few charming myths were lost in the process. For example, the oft-told tale that Buck School was destroyed on Christmas Eve 1886 when candles on the Christmas tree caught the log building on fire proved to be false. According to board records, the fire occurred on Dec. 28 and was attributed to a defect in the flue. (I prefer the other version!)

But mostly, the research led to a tremendous feeling of kinship with all those who have been a part of the school system in the Ritenour community since 1846. What we have today is due to their vision, their concern and an abiding spunk which carried the district through a civil conflict, two world wars, depressions, epidemics, election scandals and bitter community dissention.

Since school records are not available for the years prior to 1878, much of the information before that date was obtained from Robert Parkin's book, *Overland Trails and Trials*.

Patricia Lewis Williamson

We are extremely pleased to be able to make available to the Ritenour community this history of its school system. We believe that our heritage is a rich one and that knowledge of it is important as a basis on which to build an even better future for the children of the Ritenour District.

Dr. J. L. Moody
Superintendent

Lawrence T. H. Kuo
Board President

Fran Scott Kuhlmann
Vice President

David H. Bell
Director

Rosemary K. Jennewein
Director

Ralph R. English
Director

James N. Pappas
Director

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Ritenour: The Early Years

Although the name Ritenour was not used until 1867, our school district actually had its roots in Buck School, a one-room log cabin built in 1846 near the intersection of Woodson and Lackland roads. Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, who owned some 400 acres in the vicinity, donated two acres for the school site, but there seems to have been some question as to the validity of her title to the property. When she sold the remainder of her land in 1856, part of the school grounds went along with it.

To help establish that point in time, one must realize that the Louisiana Purchase had been made only 43 years before, and that Missouri had been a state for just 25 years. Abraham Lincoln was 37 years old, Victoria had been queen of England for nine years and the Dred Scott case was in progress in the courthouse downtown - the **new** courthouse in those days.

Both Woodson and St. Charles Rock roads were still little more than the Indian trails which Daniel Boone had followed on his way west from Kentucky some 40 years earlier. And the first stage route between St. Louis and St. Charles was just eight years old. The fare was \$10. 50 - rather expensive if one figures the cost per mile, but not unreasonable considering that it was a six-hour trip each way.

It hadn't been many years since settlers in this part of the territory west of St. Louis were worrying about raids by the Osage Indians, who occasionally took a few scalps north of the Meramec River, or the epidemics that followed the terrible annual floods of the Missouri River.

In 1846, Interest in a School

But by 1846, a few of the early residents had begun to be concerned about the lack of public education for their children. There weren't many families in the area, but when one takes into account the fact that the first settlers, William and Mary Walton, had eleven children, each of whom married and settled in the community to raise from

three to eleven children of his own, it didn't take long to fill a schoolhouse. Commodore Walton, John Bray and William Heapes were the first directors of Buck School. Professor Thomas W. Goldie, fresh off the boat from England, was hired as the school's first teacher at the magnificent salary of \$20 a month. In 1849 the James T. Walton family, with whom the professor was boarding, joined the gold rush to California and Goldie went along.

Evidently his luck wasn't good, because he returned to teach in the community for 25 more years.

In 1867, two years after the Civil War ended, Buck School and a temporary school for Negro children were joined to form the rural district of Ritenour. The name was chosen in honor of J.S. Ritenour, a prominent land-owner who died on March 29, 1867. The family had a large tract of land in the vicinity of Lackland and Brown roads, an area then known as Ritenour Hill. Ritenour is buried in Fee Fee Cemetery in Bridgeton.

The first trustees for the new school district were Thomas E. Rutherford, Josiah Mann and David H. Therman. A year later, increasing enrollment necessitated a one-room frame addition to the original log cabin, now called Ritenour School.

The first recorded meeting of the Ritenour Board of Directors was at 2 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, 1878. In those days, every interested taxpayer (males only, of course) met at the schoolhouse on the first Tuesday afternoon in April to elect a new member to the three-man board, determine the length of the school term for the coming year and set the tax rate necessary to produce school revenue.

At that meeting, George F. Wise was elected to join John L. Ferguson and Vinson Benson on the board. School expenses for the following year were estimated at \$2,195, distributed as follows: building and incidental expenses, \$500; incidental expenses for the Negro school, \$175; wages for two teachers \$1,500; and library fund, \$20. (This was the maximum amount allowed by the 1874 Mis-

souri Constitution to be spent annually for library books.) After determining the amount of money necessary to operate schools for the next term, the board directed the county assessor to assess properly within the district at whatever level was needed to raise that sum. In 1886, for example, the tax levied was 15 cents per \$100 valuation.

A group of Negro residents appeared before the annual meeting in 1878 and requested that a six-month school term be offered for their children. A vote of those attending the meeting set the length of the term at five months.

In September 1878, Miss Mary McClure accepted a ten-month teaching contract for \$90 per month, and Miss Anna Dunham signed a six-month contract as her assistant at the rate of \$60 per month. Miss Amanda Bragg was hired to teach Negro students at a salary of \$150 for the five-month term.

Sixty-three boys and thirty-nine girls were enrolled in Ritenour School that year, but the average attendance each day was only 49 - less than fifty per cent. The list of textbooks used included: **Greene's Grammar, Robinson's Arithmetic, Warren's Geography, Goodrich's History, Webster's Speller, McGuffey's Reader, Stoddard's Mental Arithmetic, Leigh's Pronouncing Primer, Spencer's Penmanship and Physical Geography.**

School-Age Children Total 169

The annual school enumeration taken in 1879 listed 140 white children and 29 Negro children between the ages of five and 21.

By 1880 it had been decided that a male principal would be desirable. George Wise resigned from his position on the board on Sept. 3 and was immediately hired as principal. Salaries were taking a dip from earlier years. In 1882, the principal received \$600 for eight months' work, while his assistant received the same sum for teaching ten months.

The primary business of the board of directors in those days was employing teachers, paying the bills and maintaining the school buildings. Meetings were held only two or three times a year.

Typical entries in the clerk's ledger during this period were: fixing pump, \$1.50; janitor's salary, \$7.25 (the 25 cents was for a new broom); six erasers, 15 cents; and a brush and stove blacking, 50 cents.

Quite a lot of time was devoted to interviewing and hiring teachers, but evidently the board assumed little responsibility for the actual educational program once the teacher was employed. Candidates usually appeared before the board for a personal interview, and they often "bid" for the job, offering to teach for so many months for a given sum.

In preparation for the opening of school each fall, board members were assigned various duties, such as making sure the school yard was mowed, fences were repaired and whitewashed, the schoolhouse and out-buildings were cleaned and a supply of coal was purchased.

Community residents also played an active role in maintaining the schoolhouse and grounds. In 1886, Principal James A. Kennedy issued an invitation for all

patrons and friends to visit school on April 16 to improve the schoolgrounds by planting trees and flowers.

Men were also conscientious about attending the annual school meet in g. In 1883, for example, 59 taxpayers were listed in the clerk's roster and 52 of them voted at the meeting held on April 3 of that year.

On Dec. 28, 1886, the school district suffered its first major setback. A fire which was discovered about 6 p.m. "entirely consumed the whole building." Only the organ, a globe and the Sunday school library were saved. The clerk's minutes attribute the fire to "a defect in the flue of the north room," but a penciled comment between the lines indicates that the cause was unknown.

At 9 a.m. the following morning the directors met at the home of George Wise to consider their dilemma. A vacant house belonging to John Bold was rented for the remainder of the term for \$50 per month, and it was decided that the \$2,250.85 they would realize from the insurance policy would be set aside for the building of a new schoolhouse.

John Wageley was paid \$15 to draw up plans and specifications for a two-room building which was to include a cellar for a furnace. Seven bids, ranging from \$2,100 to \$2,900 for a brick building and from \$1,825 to \$2,500 for a frame building were opened on Feb. 14, 1887. The board voted for a brick building and accepted the low bid of Tiltan and Brothers, but it was later disqualified and the \$2,150 bid of Smith and Brothers was approved.

Contractor's bonds were not common then, and to insure his satisfactory completion of the project, Smith presented the board with a list of businessmen who would serve as his guarantors. According to the minutes of Feb. 27, 1887, "Thomas and Wise (two board members) left to look them up. As well as they could find out, they were good. Mr. Sohns, according to the agency, is worth from 5 to 10 thousand dollars."

A New School for \$2,245

When the building was completed the following summer, the total cost was \$2,245, leaving a balance of \$5.85 from the insurance money.

The matter of a permanent location for the Negro school was discussed by the board almost annually after 1880. In 1884 a house was rented for \$10 a month for this purpose and a janitor was hired at 10 cents per day. On several occasions it was suggested that Ritenour cooperate with neighboring districts to build a school for Negro children, but this was never done.

Finally, at the annual meeting in 1888, residents voted 16-1 to build and furnish a school for Negroes. On Aug. 31, 1888, the board authorized John Woolfolk to "make the best arrangement he could with Jake Wagner for a site situated on Lackland Avenue." The sum of \$2,000 was paid for the land, and a bid of \$230 was received to build a frame schoolhouse 16'x22'. For an extra \$10 the carpenter agreed to add two feet to the building's length. Edmonia Parker was the first teacher to hold classes in the new school, which opened on the second Monday in October, 1888.

By the late 1880s, times were becoming hard and the annual expenditure for Ritenour schools dropped from a peak of more than \$2,000 a few years earlier to less than \$1,400 in 1888. Attendance also suffered - of the 127 school-age children counted in that year's enumeration, only 54 were enrolled in school and daily attendance averaged just 25.

Board Minutes Lively and Varied

Board minutes during this period reflect some internal conflicts. Apparently there had been criticism of the current teacher, W.W. Vaughan, for he sought letters of endorsement from the parents of many of his pupils and had them recorded in the official minutes. At this point, several pages were cut out of the minute book. Penciled in the margin is a notation that this was done "by order of two board members."

The financial problems dealt with by the board before the turn of the century seem minor by today's standards. On Dec. 16, 1890, for example, the directors discussed at

length whether to have the stable behind the school repaired at a cost of \$25 or have a new one built for \$50. (The latter course was chosen.)

Perhaps the most unusual entry in the minutes came on April 1, 1890, when the chairman of the annual meeting read a letter from the sheriff, requesting that three citizens be appointed to meet at Clayton on Saturday, April 5, to cooperate with him in wiping out "the horse thieves that infest the county." Board President John Woolfolk and residents John Shackelford and John Kattman volunteered for this mission.

Board members who served prior to 1890 included Commodore William Walton, John Bray, William Heapes, Thomas E. Rutherford, Josiah Mann, David H. Therman, Oscar P. Baldwin, George F. Wise, Vinson Benson, Marion Wise, Edward Weber, John L. Ferguson, P. Campbell, Edwin T. Thomas, John L. Woolfolk, George R. Wise, Jr., John P. Brackenridge, John Boden, Joseph Condell and Lewis DeHart, for whom DeHart School is named.

The Growing Years: 1890-1910

In 1890, when *Black Beauty* was published and the Battle of Wounded Knee occurred, the tax rate in the 23-year-old Ritenour District was 25 cents per \$100 assessed valuation - a sum sufficient to meet the modest bills which reached the board, such as the request from teacher Sarah McClure to be reimbursed for the following : blotters, 20 cents; chalk, 20 cents; ink, 85 cents; and two tin cups, 10 cents.

In December of that year the board voted to build a new stable behind the schoolhouse if it could be done for \$50. Only two bids were received - one for \$1.10 and the other from John Boden, a board member, for exactly \$50. Since there were no rules in those days prohibiting the board from doing business with one of its own members, Boden built the stable.

In 1891, the beginning of the last decade of the Nineteenth Century, James Naismith invented the game of basketball. Edison invented the kinoscope camera or peep show, and the zipper was patented.

Back in Ritenour, there was also excitement afoot. Jacob Klein was sworn into office on April 7 and ousted on April 10 when it was discovered that he was not a land-owner and taxpayer. (He was re-elected in 1898 and served for ten years.)

At the meeting following Klein's dismissal, the board took up the question of what would happen in the case of a board member who was a landowner but failed to pay his taxes. A week later they received a reply to their question from the County Superintendent of Schools and John Boden, the stable builder, was also ousted from office.

The estimated income of the district in 1891, when 46

families appeared on the tax rolls, was \$1,238.60, of which \$117.62 came from the state. The enumeration taken in May of that year showed 130 children of school age, 100 of them white and 30 black. Thus, the district's expenditure per child was just over \$9.50. Attendance continued to be a problem. School was in session for 157 days in the 1890 term, but the average student was present for only 99 days.

Insurance was not a major expenditure for the district in the 1890s. The new four-room brick Ritenour School, built in 1887, was valued at \$2,650, while the Lackland, Avenue School for Negro children was insured for \$400.

Wanted: A Gentleman Teacher

Before the beginning of the 1892-93 term, the board met at the home of the clerk, John P. Brackenridge, and decided to advertise in the *Republic* and the *Globe-Democrat* for a "gentleman teacher... In less than a week they received 14 applications, eight of them from "gentlemen," from as far away as Fayette, Columbia, Union and Alton. The "Honorable Board of Education," according to the records, hired T. M. Young at the salary of \$80 per month. To complete preparations for the new school year, board member George R. Wise, Jr., was authorized to "attend to the whitewashing of the fences and buy the coal for the two school buildings."

In 1892, when the nation was singing the new hits, "Bicycle Built for Two" and "Sidewalks of New York," Ritenour hired Miss Josephine Thomas to teach the Lackland Avenue School for \$35 per month. The spelling of the board clerk at that time left a bit to be desired. At the meeting during which Miss Thomas was hired, the board also authorized, according to his records, a 9' x 6' "antie room" to be put up in "front" of the Lackland School.



The earliest known picture of a Ritenour school in this photo from 1893, showing 25 of the 51 student enrolled that year and their teacher, Marion Humphries. Notice the sign over the door, which was painted by Oscar P. Baldwin, a former member of the Board of Education. He always preferred the shortened version of "Ritnor," and some others in the community spelled it "Ritner." Although 25 children are pictured, only 23 names accompany the picture. They are: (first row, from left) Addie Baldwin, Etta Whiteley, Emma Wagner, Annie Armbruster, Emma Chaup. Adele Heye and Arthur Wise; (second row) Kat Whitland, John Walz, Will'iam Meeken, Belle Kohner, Ollie Curdt, Edith Mertens, Lottie Da usma n, Gussie Kohner and Marion Humphries, the teacher; (back row) Henry Drakesmith, Ed Heye, William Drakesmith, Charles Eakins Louis Wegely, Morris Rickett, August Curdt and Thomas Baldwin.

In 1893 Colorado became the second state to adopt women's suffrage, and the Mormon Church was making news. President Harrison offered amnesty to all violators of the federal antipolygamy laws passed in 1862 and 1882, aimed at the multiple marriage practice of the Mormon Church. The church had withdrawn its sanction of polygamy in 1890, but some elders who had acquired several wives before that time had a problem of what to do with them.

Meanwhile, meetings of the Ritenour board were on a rather informal basis. Their meeting on May 6, 1893 was adjourned" to meet sometime in July, at the call of the president." On Aug. 29 they were faced with a problem in the form of a resignation from T. M. Young, who had been hired to teach Ritenour School. After a lengthy debate, the board decided not to accept the resignation, but to demand that Young fulfill his contract. However, when the first day of school arrived and Young did not, the

board declared the position vacant and placed a notice to patrons in the Clayton Argus, as follows:

"The cause of our school not commencing the first Monday in September is that our teacher Mr. Thomas M. Young that the board had contracted with did not come to town as he assured us he would by letter until a few days before the school was to open and left without the consent of the board. The board will make every endeavor to get a competent teacher as soon as possible and notify patrons."

Although the news of Mr. Young's departure had evidently spread and applications from four would-be teachers were on hand when the board met again, they decided not to appoint any of them. Other pressing business was at hand in the form of "charges preferred against the Myers boys for breaking the transit window of the colored schoolhouse."

On Sept. 7, 1893, just a week before the Oklahoma land rush on the Cherokee Strip, Marion Humphreys was hired at \$60 per month to begin work on Sept. 11. He is shown on Page 13 in the earliest known photo of Ritenour students.) Taxes were increased that year - all the way up to 30 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. And the board issued the first of many notices to the school janitor that they were not satisfied with his work. He was reminded that for his salary of \$12 per month he was expected "to keep the furnace and rooms in first class order."

The following year, 1894, was a time of national unemployment and labor discontent, but in the Ritenour District, things went along as usual. George R. Wise was designated to buy a bell for Ritenour School, and another big purchase was a board of real slate, eighteen feet long and three feet wide. In the past, students had done their work on a large piece of wood coated with black paint.

Seventeen Desks for \$25.20

In 1895 **The Red Badge of Courage** was published, William Allen White bought the **Emporia Gazette**, and Sears and Roebuck opened their mail order business. High prices were not a problem for Ritenour. The district purchased 12 single desks and five double desks for \$25.20, McGuffey charts for \$3.50, two readers for 80 cents and a stovepipe for 30 cents.

The following year, gold was discovered in the Yukon Territory, Billy Sunday began his evangelistic career and the first comic strip, "The Yellow Kid," was published in the New York World. The first public exhibition of motion pictures was also held in 1896, James B. Connally became the first Olympic champion in 1,500 yards with the revival of the Olympic Games in Athens, and despite the impact of his "Cross of Gold" speech, William Jennings Bryan was defeated by McKinley.

Ritenour, meanwhile, continued to have janitor problems. The minutes of the Oct. 30, 1896, meeting indicate that the janitor was notified that the board still was not satisfied with his work and that "if said work did not improve, said janitor would be removed."

On Nov. 5, 1896, the board voted to hire an assistant teacher for the remainder of the school year. However, the group met in the city the following day to buy furniture for the extra classroom and, after viewing the prices, quickly decided to reverse the vote on hiring a second teacher.

The following Nov. 5, about the time the first subway in the country was opened in Boston, the board again approved the hiring of an assistant teacher for \$35 per month. The bill for 27 desks, a teacher's desk, two teachers' chairs and a gallon of slating was \$86. The annual library expenditure, which for years had been \$20, was cut back to \$12.50 in 1897, but the janitor got a 25 percent raise - from \$12 to \$15 per month.

A few months later, in the spring of 1898, the U.S. battleship "Maine" was sunk in Havana harbor and Teddy Roosevelt formed his famous Rough Riders. Back at Ritenour the janitor continued to make news. The minutes of Dec. 28, 1898 note that the board decided it would be best for the good of the district if they hired "another" janitor. The firing, according to the minutes, was to be "in as light a form as possible on account of said janitor being a patron of said district and said board having the kindest of feelings for him and his family as school patrons."

At the annual school meeting on April 4, 1899, taxpayers present voted to raise the school levy to 40 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The assembly voted to dispense altogether with the purchase of new library books that year, and a proposal to levy a special tax to purchase a school site in Elmwood Park was defeated 45-35.

Two days later the board met in an unannounced session at the home of the president and, after reaching an agreement, called for the clerk to certify the following statement: "We the board of directors as soon as Mr. Daves resign we agree we will appoint William Love soon as qualified to fill vacancy as director."

On April 8, Edward Daves, who had served for eight years, submitted his resignation as follows: "I herewith tender my resignation as a director of said school to take place at once for reasons hereafter mentioned under the consideration that I choose my successor. I'm surrendering my resignation not because I have the office any way but perfectly legal but having my whole heart in the success of said school for the sake of compromise and settling dispute will surrender these rights hoping it may be benefit to the district I am deeply attached to."

There is no indication in the minutes of the nature of the problem which led to this action, but nearly 18 months later a new board clerk, Henry Wallis, turned back to this page in the record book and scribbled this note in the margin: "The statements made therein by Mr. Daves are useless talk. As Mr. Daves lives outside the district he was forced by Mr. Klein either to resign or stand suit. Mr. Daves chose the first, withdrew from an illegally held position with grace, without being sued. This is the truth and nothing but the truth."

A School for Elmwood

In November 1899 a group of citizens from Elmwood Park proposed to furnish a school house free of rent and new equipment for their students if the board would provide a teacher for three months at \$35 per month and "two small loads of coal." The board approved the suggestion and property was secured in Block 9 of Robertson Street, with the understanding that the building would revert back to its owner if at any time the board ceased to use it as a "branch school." A teacher was hired on Dec. 2 and classes began on Dec. 4.

As the new century opened, a hint of squabbles within the board membership continued. Alongside the minutes for the April 2, 1900, meeting, Henry Wallis added these lines, dated March 30, 1901: "Two important propositions made at this meeting and voted on are not entered or mentioned in this record, as should have been done. (See School Law . . .) First, to establish an additional school in Elmwood Park according to a petition. Result was defeated by about two-thirds majority against it. Second, to increase the taxation by 5 cents on the \$100 above the limit of 40 cents on \$100 was also defeated by the voting taxpayers by a great majority of two-thirds present and voting on this proposition. Why these very important transactions of the annual school meeting were thus omitted is an open question to every citizen and taxpayer of the district."

The new century saw the Oldsmobile Company of Detroit began the first mass production of automobiles - 400 came off the line the first year. Carrie Nation began her crusade against alcohol and the life expectancy of new babies was 48 years for males and 51 for females.

Books adopted for use by Ritenour students in 1900-01 were **White's Oral Arithmetic**, **Milne's Written Arithmetic** and **Standard Arithmetic**, **Rand-McNally's Elementary Geography** and **Complete Geography**, **Rader and Thunimel's History and Civil Government**, **Morris's Elementary History**, **Skinn's History of the American People**, **DeGarmo's Language**, the **Natural System or Vertical Writing**, **Sever's Progressive Speller** and the **New Franklin Primer**.

The level of wages for the working class is evidenced by a note that P. Ellis received \$6.50 for five days' labor cleaning the school cistern in September 1900.

Late in January 1901 the board met to discuss the death of a Ritenour student from "the black diphtheria" within 24 hours after his attendance at school. Classes were suspended for several days and the schoolhouse was fumigated.

Still more troubles ensued with the janitor and on Feb. 9, 1901, the clerk was instructed to inform the current custodian that he was discharged, "his janitorship expiring as of this date."

By November of that year, two months after the assassination of President McKinley, enrollment at Ritenour School reached 205 and parents of non-resident students were notified that they must pay \$1.50 per month tuition for each child. In October 1902 a special meeting of

taxpayers was held to vote on the addition of a room to the schoolhouse, and the proposal was approved 15-2. A 40-cent increase in the tax levy to pay for the addition passed 16-2.

In 1903 the first transcontinental auto journey from San Francisco to New York was completed in 52 days. Folks were reading *Call of the Wild* and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *The Great Train Robbery* was the first film to use a moving camera, and Orville Wright's plane stayed aloft for 12 seconds.

Holiday for Dedication of Fairgrounds

In January 1903 the board received four bids ranging from \$4,238.50 to \$6,000 for building a new schoolhouse, and on April 7 a \$5,000 bond issue was approved by a vote of 49-5. On April 30 a school holiday was granted in honor of the dedication of the World's Fairgrounds in Forest Park. That winter the district adopted its own form of daylight savings time. "Because of short day light," the board decreed that school hours would be from 9 to 12 and from 12:30 to 3:30, instead of from 9 to 12 and 1 to 4.

The 1904, the great World's Fair year, the Democratic Party met in St. Louis and nominated Alton B. Parker of New York for President. (If the name doesn't ring a bell, it's because he was defeated by a fellow named Teddy Roosevelt.) This was also the year that Frank Phillips, founder of the Phillips Oil Company, said, "I think people are going to buy quite a passel of these gasoline buggies and they need gasoline to make 'em go. It may be the thing has a future."

During the annual school meeting on April 5, 1904, those present engaged in a lengthy discussion as to whether the board had the power to allow the school building and premises to be used for the purpose of religious, political and other public assemblies. In the heat of the debate, the district clerk resigned, effective immediately. The crowd finally voted 21-7 to give the board the power to permit such use of the building. Board notes indicate that the Sunday school was charged 25 cents per week for coal during the winter months.

On March 11, 1905, the board received a petition to select a site and issue bonds of \$2,000 to build a school in the Home Heights subdivision. Three weeks later, at the annual school meeting, taxpayers approved the \$2,000 bond issue by a vote of 37-11.

The school had its share of behavior problems in those days. At a meeting in February 1905, a father appeared before the board to "make complaint against two students for their outrageous and immoral treatment of his little girl and boy while on the way home." Fathers of the offenders were notified and the boys were suspended.

On June 16, 1905, the board approved the purchase for \$275 of a lot fronting on Woodson Road from Frederick and Henrietta Mertens for the purpose of building a new school for Negro children. On July 25 they decided they didn't want that particular piece of property after all, and on Aug. 1 Mertens threatened to file suit against the board unless they paid him \$36 "for his trouble." The board

refused to pay more than \$16 and apparently the matter was settled peacefully.

No Money to Pay the Bills

By 1906 more serious problems were on the horizon for Ritenour. On March 13 the board received petitions requesting that two more new schools be built, and a few days later they were notified by the county treasurer that there were no funds to meet payments of warrants due. A vote was taken to borrow \$1,000 to pay bills for the rest of the school term .

At the annual meeting on April 3, just two weeks before the San Francisco earthquake and fire, Edward Gocke moved that the eastern part of the school district be divided. It was defeated by a vote of 65-7. Edward Schroer then proposed that the southeastern part of the Ritenour District be separated and attached to a neighboring district. This, too, was defeated by a vote of 45-19.

Later that month E. E. Morton was hired as principal of Ritenour School and supervisor of other teachers at the salary of \$100 per month. The staff for 1906-07 included three assistant teachers at Ritenour School, and one teacher each at the Home Heights School and the school for Negro children.

On April 2, 1907, Ritenour taxpayers voted 94-32 to form a village school district with six board members instead of three. The group also approved by a vote of 75-22 issuing \$15,000 in bonds to provide additional school facilities. Those who signed the petition to organize the village district were O. P. Baldwin, F. Becker, William Heidbrink, J. R. Roux, O. H. Williams, Leonard Graves , Edward McKay, James Garnett, Robert Hagerty , W. M. Sutherland , Orland Mahar, D. C. Mayhugh, T.K. Jones, J. J. Anselm, E. D. Briley, John Small and J. H. Wise. The first six directors for the reorganized district were: Marcus Ruehmann; Clarence Campbell, president; A. K. Miller, secretary; T. K. Jones, treasurer; Jacob Klein and Sam S. Pomeroy. The group was now authorized to handle their own money, rather than routing all income and expenditures through the county treasurer.

Later in April 1907 the board hired an architect to plan a new eight-room building on the site of Ritenour School. In May they received a petition from a number of taxpayers asking that taxes be raised to meet expenses for the following year. Bewildered by this unusual request, the board "laid over" the petition until they could be advised by the county treasurer.

As August drew to a close, the board announced that the opening of Home Heights School would be delayed a month. Ritenour, Elmwood and the Lackland Avenue schools opened on time. Ritenour School boasted a new marble slab over the front door, engraved with its name. It was donated by Guy Felty, later a board member.

The Oct. 2 board meeting was cancelled so that members could attend the Veiled Prophet Parade. At a meeting the following week the board discussed the need

for monthly teachers' meetings and report cards. The secretary wrote to a firm in Chicago about the cost of report cards and found that enough for all students would cost \$3.50.

In January 1908 the board approved a request from teachers to use the schoolhouse "to present an entertainment to raise money to buy a piano." Orah Corder became the district's first substitute teacher at a salary of \$2 per day.

The annual school meeting in April 1908 was the first for which board candidates had to file in advance with the board clerk, and it also marked the first use of printed ballots. The new president, Thomas K. Jones, appointed a committee to formulate a set of rules for the order of business by the board and suggested that the second Tuesday of each month be set as the time for regular board meetings.

Teachers Range From Excellent to Trying

At the meeting on May 4, 1908, the board voted to put in a system to pump water from the well in the schoolyard to a barrel in the cellar for use in the boiler. Principal E. E. Morton reported on the progress of individual teachers. His ratings ranged from "excellent" to "trying." By that time Morton's monthly salary was \$110, while the pay for teachers ranged from \$40 to \$65.

The district enumeration for 1908 reported 489 white students and 45 Negro students. However, the number of white students enrolled in school was only 301, while 47 Negro children were on the rolls. (The reason for this was that for many years Ritenour accepted tuition students from the Wellston and Mt. Pleasant districts, which did not provide schools for Negro children.) The district clerk's annual report also noted that the school library contained 148 books valued at \$50.

On April 9, 1909, Thomas R. Etherington, grandfather of John S. Etherington, Jr., who was to serve on the board 60 years later, was sworn into office.

In 1910 Halley's Comet appeared without the predicted occurrence of disaster. Many had believed that the earth would pass through the comet's tail and that everything on earth would be destroyed. Among residents of the United States over 25 years of age, less than half had completed grade school.

The electric bill for Ritenour schools in March 1910 was \$1.65. Enrollment in district schools that month was 343, but the average daily attendance was 274.

On March 14, taxpayers voted 116 to 115 to sell the Lackland Avenue School and use the funds to buy a site and build a new school for Negro children in Elmwood. A proposal to issue \$3,000 in bonds to build the Elmwood school was defeated 103-65.

The district experienced its first defeat in a tax election that spring when a proposal which would have added 17 ½ cents to the 40-cent tax rate was voted down

108-102. During the next few weeks the board advertised the fact that the increase was needed to renew insurance premiums for the next three years, and at a special school meeting on May 7 the tax increase was approved by a vote of 21-1.

On Sept. 3, 1910, teachers met with the board to make plans for the coming year. Although there is no direct reference in the board minutes to establishing high school classes in the district, it is noted that tuition was set at \$10 per year for high school students residing outside the

Ritenour District.

There were 596 students enrolled in district schools that fall, and class size ranged from 19 in the Lackland Avenue School to 45 elsewhere. The Overland Park Dramatic Club presented the district a new set of encyclopedias and an 18-inch globe, the quarterly phone bill was \$4.50 (plus 30 cents for long distance calls), and the janitor at Ritenour School reported that the Overland Park Cadets were using the schoolground to practice their drills. (He was instructed to tell them to stop.)

Year of Turmoil: 1911-1919

When Halley's Comet appeared in 1910, many predicted that the earth would be destroyed. Although these dire predictions failed to materialize, persons close to school affairs in the Ritenour District in the second decade of the new century must have wondered if the financial difficulties and community dissention they faced were a curse following in the comet's trail. Never before or since has the school district experienced the bitter and continuing problems it knew from 1911 to 1920.

The year 1911 began innocently enough. "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band" led the list of popular songs, and the invention of the electric self-starter made it possible for women to drive without a male companion to crank the engine.

Among the applicants for a teaching vacancy was a Miss Harris, whose credentials included a high school diploma and ten months at the state "normal school." She lost out to Miss Alpha Oakes, a 1910 graduate of the Springfield State Normal School. Her salary was \$50 per month.

In March the board received petitions calling for two bond issues - \$1,000 for a school in Elmwood Park (defeated the previous year by a vote of 103-65) and \$8,000 for a new brick school in Home Heights, despite the fact that the current Home Heights School was only four years old. At the April election, both bond issues failed to receive the necessary two-thirds approval, although a substantial majority cast affirmative votes. It was prophetic of more hard times to come.

Later in April teachers for the following year were hired at salaries ranging from \$45 to \$70 per month, and a janitor was employed for \$50 per month. On April 25 the board met in a special session to interview and hire Perry S. Allen, principal of Maplewood High School, as the district's first official superintendent. His predecessor, E.E. Morton, had performed many of a superintendent's duties, but his title was supervising principal.

A large delegation of residents from Home Heights, Shackelford, Thomas Station, Elmwood Park and Overland Park attended a board meeting on May 9 to demand that the bond issues be resubmitted. A second election was held on June 3 and both proposals were again defeated, this time by a much greater majority.

Even though a new school in Elmwood had been approved in 1910, there was still no money available to build it, so in August 1911 Frank and Charles Catlin and Henry Hill, trustees of the Elmwood Park Baptist Church appeared before the board and agreed to extend the lease on their building for school purposes until May 1912.

Board members and teachers attended a special meeting on Sept. 2 to discuss the coming term. According to the minutes, "In the absence of the president and vice president the meeting was called to order by the secretary who spoke on the school, its needs, conditions and ambitions, what the board expected of the teachers and what the board would do in helping the teachers carry out its instructions. Mr. McKay spoke on several subjects in connection with school work and improvement, especially on penmanship. Mr. Etherington spoke on discipline and order. Superintendent Allen spoke on general school topics. On a call by the secretary for suggestions as to new

methods and betterments, Miss Terry suggested separate drinking cups for all scholars."

Ritenour First to Offer Education for Negroes

At the beginning of the 1911-12 school term, a letter to the board from Dr. R. D. Moon, president of the Central School District, requested that four Negro children be admitted to the Lackland A venue School and the bill for their tuition sent to the Central District. As Ritenour was the first district in the area to provide education for Negroes, tuition students from surrounding districts were common.

At the Oct. 10 meeting the board authorized the purchase of four wooden barrels for drinking water and students were notified to provide themselves with drinking cups, as the board would no-longer provide cups after Nov. 1.

In November Trustee Henry Hill of Elmwood Park requested that the board pay the two months' back rent due on school facilities. A bill for \$51.12 was received from the American Book Company for 109 new books, the superintendent was authorized to purchase nine electric bells with wire and batteries, and the committee on thermometers and waste baskets reported they were unable to secure these items at present.

In the early months of 1912 New Mexico and Arizona became the 47th and 48th states, respectively, New York passed a law limiting labor to a maximum of 54 hours per week, William Randolph Hearst began to amass his chain of newspapers and the favorite songs in the country were "Melancholy Baby" and "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi."

At its January meeting the Ritenour board spent considerable time trying to determine who started a stone-throwing incident and the superintendent reported that he had dismissed school at Home Heights that day when the inside temperature fell to 38°.

At a special meeting in February the board "considered the school situation," and a mass meeting was called for March 8 to discuss with the public the problem of over-crowded classrooms. Only 17 citizens appeared at that meeting and another was held on March 12, which produced a petition calling for a \$25,000 bond issue to build new schools in Home Heights Overland Park and Elmwood Park.

Also on the ballot for the April 2 election was a request from voters in Home Heights, Thomas Station, Shirley Hills, Maple Place and Shackelford, asking that they be separated from the Ritenour District to form a school district of their own. This proposal was defeated by only three votes - 159-156. Again, the bond issue received a substantial majority, but fell short of the necessary two-thirds.

The sinking of the Titanic with the loss of 1,500 lives on April 14 probably caused less commotion in the Ritenour community than the letter from County Superintendent of Schools W. T. Bender stating that he had received a

petition calling for the division of the school district. The board, which had considered the matter settled, was notified to attend a hearing in Bender's office on April 12.

A month later the Ritenour board was informed that the board of arbitration appointed by Bender had found that "division was not in the best interest of the district." In a strange move that prophesied problems in the future, board member Marcus Ruehmann suggested that the board not accept this report. However, his motion was not seconded and the board voted "that the report be spread on the minutes."

Bond Issue Loses by One Vote

In June a delegation from Elmwood Park called for another special bond election, which was set for July 6. Minutes of the election meeting are as follows: "Mr. Williams as president of the board addressed the voters as to the call as made. Mr. Baldwin addressed the voters in favor of the bond issue. Mr. Ruehmann also addressed. Mr. Carter also added to same. Mr. Gervais spoke against it. Robert Jefferson spoke for Elmwood Park. Mr. Walker spoke for Elmwood Park. Mr. Morath spoke against the issuance of any bonds. Mr. Preuss spoke against the bond issue." The vote was 39-21 against the proposal. The change of only one negative vote would have carried the election.

July came and the board was still without a building in Elmwood. The church declined to rent their facilities for another year, but the teacher, Miss Shores, reported she knew of a vacant house which might be suitable. However, the board took no action, being busy with "rumors which are being heard in reference to the conduct of a janitor." Three members were appointed to investigate.

The August a group of Elmwood citizens presented a petition for another bond issue election. The board tied 2-2 on whether to set another election date and the president cast the deciding vote against it. After a report that the janitor in question had invited young girls to visit him at the schoolhouse on Saturday, it was recommended that "some other arrangements be made for a janitor." Two board members were in favor of this action, one voted against it and two declined to vote at all.

A week later the board asked visitors to leave a special meeting called to consider the situation in Elmwood. The matter of another bond election was "laid over" until the next regular meeting, and the board made arrangements to rent the "Fisher place" for the next nine months for \$10 per month.

At a meeting in September, the president stepped down from the chair to address the board regarding the dismissed janitor and asked that charges against him be struck from the minutes. This motion was defeated. He then asked the board to at least note in the minutes the fact that the janitor had been tried in the Justice Court and found not guilty. This motion carried.

The October the president reported that since state funds to the school district had increased \$280 since the

previous year he felt they could afford to hire part-time drawing and music teachers. Mrs. J. A. Prichard and Mrs. C. R. Embree were hired for these positions at the rates of \$16 and \$15 per month, respectively. Other expenses were equally high. In November the board approved a donation of \$5 toward a street crossing at the front gate of Ritenour School and a walk along Woodson Road.

Across the country in 1913 people were singing "Peg o' My Heart" and "Ballin' the Jack," but the same old tune prevailed in Ritenour - too many students, too little room and no money to correct the situation. On Feb. 26 the board held a special session to discuss the fact that enrollment in September would be far greater than the schools could accommodate. A mass meeting was called for March 15 to acquaint voters with the problem.

Two days before the mass meeting the board received yet another petition calling for division of the school district. In the April 1 election, the bond issues proposed by the board were overwhelmingly defeated, as was the 60-cent tax levy. The division proposal passed 59-37 on the north side of the district, but was defeated 163-51 on the south side to retain the status quo. This time the group of malcontents wasted no time in presenting their petition to the county superintendent, and the board hired an attorney to represent them at the hearing on April 12.

In another election on April 26 an 80-cent tax levy was approved. Heartened by this action, the board called for a \$33,000 bond issue election on May 16, the proceeds to be used for new schools in Charlack and Elmwood Park, improvements to Ritenour School and the acquisition of a school site on Marion Avenue. Ben Blewitt, superintendent of schools in St. Louis, addressed a mass meeting on May 10, but to no avail. The bond issue was again defeated.

Another election was held on June 21 with even drearier results. Of the 61 voters present, only 16 favored the bond issue. Opposition to the board grew more intense. The case of a man seen tearing down a notice of the May 16 election posted at St. John station was turned over to the prosecuting attorney, and the school janitor was asked to attend a special meeting in July "in order to supply information to the board as to who posted the letter on the school house doors on the occasion of the last special bond issue election."

According to board records, "Mr. Bunton, the janitor, at first declined to give the name of the party, stating he feared trouble for himself which was his reason for refusing to give the desired information to the board and after being assured that no trouble would come to him from this source at least none in which the board would not uphold him he named the man whom he saw put up these notices. There being no other witnesses the board decided not to take up this matter any further and same was dropped."

Throughout the summer of 1913 the board also had internal problems, centering on a 3-3 tie over the election of a treasurer. Board rules gave the president a double

vote to break ties, but several members protested this method of deciding the matter.

More positive action was the appropriation of \$185 for equipment to set up a science laboratory.

First High School Class for Negroes

On Aug. 12 Robert Jefferson and Frank Catlin of Elmwood requested that a high school class be started for Negro students. The board approved this action and designated Lackland Avenue School as the location for the class. Mrs. Nesbit, the teacher, notified the board that she would be pleased to undertake this work and complimented the board for inaugurating the first high school for Negro pupils in St. Louis County.

Along with their weightier decisions, the board still had to deal with more mundane matters - bills for November 1913 included "ten cents for mousetraps and five cents for cheese." Superintendent Allen reported an enrollment of 464, and the board approved a request from The newly organized Mothers' Club to use the school building for meetings.

The following month Charlie Chaplin began his movie career in producer Mack Sennett's "Keys tone Comedies" and the noted newspaperman Arthur Brisbane stated in the Chicago **Record - Herald** that "motion pictures are just a passing fancy and aren't worth comment in this newspaper."

In January 1914 the two high school teachers, Miss Berry and Miss Aegerter, discussed with the board the conduct of some of their students. Since all of the third-year high school students had left school, it was recommended by the superintendent that one of the teachers be used to divide the seventh - eighth grade room. When Miss Aegerter was asked to take the seventh grade, she first asked for several days to consider the matter, but before leaving the room turned in her written resignation.

The problems of factions vying for control within the school district continued to grow. According to the minutes of the Jan. 27 meeting, "several members of the board reported receiving requests for the use of Home Heights School for a meeting on Jan. 30." Messrs. Williams, Howe, Adams and McKay reported giving their consent, providing the meeting was in the interest of the school. Mr. Carter refused and Mr. Baldwin was not approached. However, not one of the five members who were asked for the use of the school could give the name of the party making the request. Mr. Howe made a motion that the use of the school be withheld until a written application had been made signed by at least a dozen tax-payers of the district, stating for what purpose the meeting is to be held and assume the responsibility for any damage to building and file a copy of the notice of the meeting if issued.

In February the board received a petition calling for another bond issue election. By the time the election was held on April 7, the perennial proposal to divide the school district was again on the ballot, along with a \$35,000 bond

issue proposed by residents, a \$25,000 bond issue proposed by the board and a proposal to make free textbooks available to all students.

Both bond issues failed, although the \$35,000 proposal received more votes than the board's less expensive version. The proposal to divide the district was approved 3-1 in the northern half of the district, but defeated by the same margin in the much more populous south side. The only winner was the free textbook proposal, which was approved 243-63.

The first mention of any type of athletic competition for Ritenour students came in April 1914, when the board "discussed the purchase of athletic 'paraphernalia' for the boys" and allotted \$10 to this purpose. The principal was to have charge of this equipment and was to be present at all practices "to avoid anyone getting hurt if possible."

At the following meeting, Mr. Allen reported that "the \$10 voted by the board to purchase athletic 'paraphernalia' for the use of the boys was asked on the strength of a proposed county school athletic meet, but as same had been called off he did not want to spend the amount without explaining to the board. Mr. Howe suggested that some less strenuous games be indulged in by the boys as he was not in favor of the board purchasing anything that could cause someone to get hurt. Mr. Allen stated he would see what a good punching bag could be secured for."

Etherton Becomes Second Superintendent

At the same meeting, another petition was received calling for a bond issue and the board hired H. C. Etherton, principal of McKinley School in Normandy, as superintendent for 1914-15.

At a meeting in May, the board received a letter from the county superintendent saying that the petition calling for division of the district had again been denied. At the same meeting, two board members were appointed to investigate charges of slanderous remarks against a board member over the hiring of a young lady as the new music teacher. (This incident or another similar situation was to have serious repercussions two years later.) A petition was received from 22 taxpayers requesting that electric lights be installed in Home Heights School. This was unanimously approved and records of a later meeting indicate that the wiring was done at a cost of \$30.

Another special election was held on June 13, 1914. No results are listed in the minutes, but the fact that the residents petitioned the board on July 14 for still another election indicates that the one in June met with no success. The board at first voted against resubmission of the bond issue, but this action brought "such a storm of protest" from the 40 people in the audience that they re-voted, with the chair casting the deciding vote in favor of resubmission. This election, held on Aug. 8, resulted in a 209-207 defeat of the bond proposal.

During the summer of 1914, as Germany declared war on Russia, France and Belgium and President Wilson urged neutrality for the U.S., the Ritenour board continued to wrestle with its own problems. The committee appointed to investigate charges that the board president appointed a teacher for his own personal gain concluded

that the board "should ignore any charges that may reflect upon his integrity as an honorable and just director."

The superintendent reported that he had gone over the matter of free textbooks very carefully and found that it would cost about \$1,300 to furnish free books throughout all the schools. He reported that \$1,100 worth of books could be purchased at the legal rate from the American Book Company, which had agreed to accept the first free textbook funds received by Ritenour from the state as initial payment on the order. A final settlement with the company was to be made with state funds due the following year.

By August the board was searching for space in the community to hold the overflow from Ritenour School, and it was reported that residents of Midland Heights were attempting to find a building for primary classes, providing the board would supply a teacher and "fule."

Ten freshmen enrolled in the fall of 1914 in Ritenour's first four-year high school program. They were Laura Ryder, Florida Lindhorst, Lillian Elgasser and Norene Wraight who were to graduate in 1918, along with Arthur Adams, Marie Heidbrink, Isabel McKay, Mabel Scott, Athlyne Smith and Edgar Willett. Their classes were held in the upstairs room on the southwest corner of Ritenour School.

In October 1914 Robert Goddard, who was later to develop the theory of rockets fired in stages as a method of reaching the moon, patented his first liquid fuel rocket. As 1915 began, Alexander Graham Berlin New York spoke to Dr. Thomas Watson in San Francisco in the first transcontinental telephone call, and "Birth of a Nation," the first 12-reel movie, premiered in New York.

The Ritenour board, meanwhile, was occupied with a complaint of a patron that "they were not using enough diligence in ferreting out cases of contagious disease" and their own inability to agree on the appointment of three judges for the school election in April. Finally they accepted the suggestion of one board member that if the three members who opposed him would agree on the candidate he favored, they could appoint the other judges, "so long as one of them was not from Midland Heights."

In April 1915 the superintendent told the board he "fully expected the state superintendent to visit our schools next year and to place the high school upon the approved list." And, wonder of wonders, a bond issue for a new school in Elmwood Park was approved on April 15 by a vote of 227-108. Other proposals for a new school in Midland Heights and improvements to Ritenour School were again defeated.

On May 8, the day after 128 American lives were lost in the sinking of the British steamer "Lusitania" by a German submarine, Ritenour voters approved two more bond issues - \$4,000 for a new four-room school in Home Heights and \$9,000 for a two-room addition and repairs to Ritenour School.

In May the board held a special meeting to plan the school picnic, for which children were asked to bring ten cents apiece. The superintendent was instructed to

purchase flags and ribbons and a rubber stamp for picnic purposes, and "Mr. Reinemer stated he would donate a box of lemons, which was accepted with thanks." The superintendent was also given permission to hire "cars" for the picnic, evidently referring to the streetcars which ran from Overland all the way to the picnic site at Creve Coeur Lake.

Construction began in June on the school in Elmwood. The board wanted to insert a "union labor only" clause in the contract, but were advised by their attorney that this was discriminatory and illegal. On June 16 the board received a petition for a special bond election to build a school in Midland Heights. They refused to consider the petition, however, unless its backers could get the signatures of a majority of the voters in the school district. On June 24 the president reported that "someone held a meeting at Home Heights last night without his permission."

The period from April 1915 to April 1916 was probably the most hectic year in Ritenour's history. Ninety board meetings were held during this 12-month period, 41 of them between June and September. Although board members must have heaved a collective sigh of relief when the bond issues were finally approved, they were to find that their troubles were only beginning.

Sixteen teachers were hired for the 1915-16 term and only one made more than the \$70 per month earned by the janitor. In one of their infrequent displays of interest in what actually went on in the classroom, the board requested the superintendent to give them a copy of the examination questions each quarter, "also the results of same and the averages so the board could compare the progress the school is making each year." Manual training, domestic science and art classes were added to the senior high curriculum.

On Aug. 9 the board received ominous news - a letter from the Commercial and Financial Council asking for information about the dispute on the May bond election. The board replied that as far as they knew nothing had been done to change or question the results of the election. It was the first reference to the possibility of serious trouble on the horizon.

Because facilities were not ready, the board met a week before school was to open and postponed the beginning of the term until Oct. 4. Tension between the board and the community continued. A resident appeared at the Sept. 14 meeting and requested to see minutes of previous meetings. The board refused. Finally, it was decided that the man would be permitted to hire a stenographer to copy portions of the minutes which he read aloud at a special meeting later in the month.

The Great Ballot Box Mystery

On Sept. 18 "the great ballot box mystery" began to unfold when the board secretary reported that he had discovered about 5 o'clock that afternoon that ballots from the May 8 election had been stolen. According to the minutes, "this brought about quite a discussion." At a special meeting the following day, a reporter was present and the board made plans to "have the facts published in the newspapers" and to offer a \$50 reward for information leading to the arrest of the thief.

On Sept. 28 an attorney for the firm which purchased the bonds authorized by the May 8 election recommended to the board "a conciliatory mode of procedure in regard to the bond election agitation. He also explained the grave results that would result to the district if any slur was put upon paper issued by the district." While the situation was never spelled out clearly in the minutes, it is evident there was considerable speculation about the accuracy of the reported election results. When it was feared that the ballots might be recounted, they were either stolen or destroyed. (So great was the effect of the controversy upon the community that a resident who discussed the matter with the author 62 years later said that while "several persons were suspected," he wouldn't want to "name names.")

It was not until Oct. 12, nearly a month after the original report of the theft, that the secretary's account of the event was recorded in the minutes, as follows: "The secretary was told on a Sunday about 8:30 o'clock about three weeks before Sept. 18 by Mr. Reinemer that Dr. Prichard would not have the ballots in the bank longer. Mr. Reinemer volunteering to help the secretary carry the ballots and other records to the schoolhouse which was done. The secretary stated he intended to place the records in the office, Mr. Reinemer having turned over the key to Mr. Etherton. So the records were placed in one of the wardrobes with the idea of moving to the office in the near future.

"The secretary further stated that upon the next occasion being a few nights later he noticed that the records had been moved and supposed that the janitor or Mr. Etherton had moved them in the office. However he made efforts to discover what had been done with them. This led to the janitor making a trip to the schoolhouse to look for the ballots. He discovered the records and box and reported his find to Mr. Reinemer on Friday, the 17th. Mr. Reinemer gave the secretary the janitor's report Saturday afternoon the 18th, whereupon the secretary went directly to the schoolhouse and found the ballot box broken open, the facts were reported as above to the board Saturday night."

In the minutes for Oct. 16 is a reference to "the suit filed in Clayton." A few days later the board met with Mr. Gardner, an attorney hired to defend the board against charges filed by the Voters League.

The Nov. 2 meeting was an eventful one. The board's attorney informed them that their case would be heard on Saturday, there were complaints from the Home Heights community that a girder in the new building rested on hollow tile, and a board member reported that there had been some "permissive shooting" near Home Heights School and that several scholars had been hit. The latter problem was solved by notifying the culprit's father, who promised "that nothing of like nature would happen again."

Later in November the superintendent reported that 22 pupils were enrolled in high school classes. "He also gave a comparison between last year and this year which showed a good improvement especially in regard to corporal punishment and tardiness." A request from Mrs. B. Williams to open a store on the Home Heights schoolgrounds was turned down by the board.

Shortly before the end of 1915 the board voted to close the Lackland Avenue School and consolidate its operation with that of the new building in Elmwood. Within a few days after taking this action, the board received a letter from Mr. Carter, the father of children who attended the Lackland Avenue School, stating that he would compel the board to give his children school facilities other than those provided for them." The board requested the county superintendent to "inform them of their duties in regard to the Reed and Carter children."

Minor problems continued apace with the secretary's spelling. In the minutes of the Dec. 14 meeting, he reported that "the radiator east of the zinc in the domestic science room leaks and the one south of the zinc does not heat."

The first meeting in January 1916 was another lively one. The contractor for the new schools apologized for not being active as a supervisor of the work. The president made a motion to accept this apology, but there was no second. Instead a complaint was made that several women had been annoying the school at Home Heights by their manner of visiting, and the board promptly established Friday afternoon as visitors' day.

The secretary, who wrote by hand accounts of all board activities, suggested that "the business of the 'cooperative' has grown to such an extent that a typewriter should be one of the possessions of the school district." Apparently other members were not enthused. "It being late," his report concludes, "no action was taken."

As January progressed, tempers continued to flare at board meetings. Records of a special meeting at the old Home Heights School on Jan. 18, read as follows: "The chair called upon the visitors asking their desire but received an answer that they had nothing to say simply wishing to hear the proceedings. Chair explained that this was a special meeting called to take up special matters and the board could not be disturbed while transacting this business. The visitors objected to this.

Shocking Language Disrupts Meeting

"The board voted to go into executive session, the chair asking the visitors to leave. This they objected to and Mr. Fleishman asked Mr. Howe why the new (Home Heights) school was not opened. Mr. Howe stated the heating plant was not in working condition. Mr. Fleishman asked if this was the only reason. Mr. Howe stating it is one of the reasons. Mr. Fleishman repeated his question several times, each time growing more boisterous. Mr. Howe stated as far as he knew that was the only reason. Mr. Fleishman thereupon called him a 'damn liar.' Whereupon Mr. Ringen, stating that considering the language used, he moved to adjourn the meeting." Board minutes indicate, however, that the board simply moved to Ritenour School, where they reconvened their meeting without an audience. During this session the man installing the furnace at Home Heights promised to have it completed "by Tuesday night."

Tuesday came and the new building was still without heat, but the opening date was set for Jan. 31, 1916. An

open house at Home Heights was set for Feb. 5, with a similar entertainment at Ritenour School planned for Feb. 12. The board approved the superintendent's suggestion that "he put out a pamphlet with pictures of the buildings and teachers to let people know what is being done."

In the midst of these plans, a letter arrived from the board's attorney stating that a new suit had been filed to declare the May 1915 bond issue void.

Early in February, the superintendent reported to the board that "one Dr. Killian appeared before him and stated he had under his care a crippled 'orphan' boy who was very bright and asked to have him admitted to our schools." The request was approved with the stipulation that "the boy must be withdrawn if at any time he inconveniences the other pupils."

On March 14, 1916, the day before Gen. John J. Pershing began his pursuit of Pancho Villa into Mexico, Mr. Robinson, one of the candidates for the coming election, stated he wished to inform the board that those candidates, three in number, with which he is affiliated with would demand to have a challenger at the polls on April 4.

"The president instructed the secretary to get a report from some attorney or the state superintendent as to the requirements in this case."

Mr. Etz' Boy Breaks a Window

At a meeting later that month, the superintendent reported that "Mr. Etz' boy broke one of the front windows." Two weeks later the window had still not been repaired and Mr. Etz appeared before the board to state that "the superintendent did not act as a man in the matter and his son did not break the window." The board finally decided it would be prudent to replace the window first and worry later about assigning the blame.

The boy in question was Carl Etz, who grew up and founded an architectural firm which did a great deal of work for the Ritenour District. He still resides in Overland, and, while he does not remember the window-breaking incident says it is not unlikely since a large baseball diamond was located just across Woodson Road from Ritenour School.

Robinson and his running mates, Messrs. Lane and Wurdack, were overwhelmingly elected on April 4, and Robinson and Wurdack were immediately named president and vice president of the board, respectively.

The legality of the May 1915 bond issue again became a question on May 13, 1916 when Robinson stated "he would not sign checks on the May 1915 bond issue on grounds of illegality of the issue. The treasurer stated he would move a demand that the interest be paid and handed to the secretary a check for the amount due signed by himself along with a written protest."

On May 9, 1916, the board members on the Teachers' Committee reported that "after meeting and going over the matter thoroughly, they were of the opinion that the first thing to be done about the teaching force for the coming season is to decide on the superintendency. This

committee has come to the conclusion that it is for the best interests of the school district that a new superintendent be appointed."

Among the 14 candidates was one woman, Miss Caroline Bartholomew of Overland, who met with the board on May 13. She was accorded the first interview, after which the male candidates drew lots to determine the order of their five-minute interviews. The board's choice was Joshua Richmond.

Board minutes give little indication of the turmoil leading to the decision to dismiss H. C. Etherton as superintendent, but a 1967 interview by the author with Miss Claudia Lide, who was hired to teach Ritenour's high school classes in 1914, sheds more light on the matter.

"I taught the four subjects - English, history, Latin and math," said Miss Lide, who later became executive secretary of the St. Louis YWCA. "I lived on Russell Avenue in the city and traveled on three different street cars for about an hour and a half each morning to get to Overland.

"Teaching in a room of the grammar school had its disadvantages. The principal often used my room as a place to discipline children. Once he rushed in and commanded a young child to crawl under my desk. Another time he placed four little bad boys on my desk and put a large book in the hands of each. I was expected to continue teaching my high school students without interruption!

"Our superintendent, H. C. Etherton, was eager to get our high school accredited. In 1915 a wing was built on Ritenour School especially for high school students, more teachers were hired and enrollment jumped to 29 in 1916.

"But he ran into problems when he tried to get rid of certain incompetent teachers who were relatives of board members. Too, there was little interest generally in schooling beyond the eighth grade. Many in the community declared that the pupils were just going to high school to support the teachers.

"The teachers, as well as the superintendent, were really having a hard time. Most of us rode the Creve Coeur street car on an early morning run termed 'The Teachers' Special.' One morning the motorman greeted us with the news that the 'board met last night and canned your superintendent and you teachers will be next.' The board asked us to remain, but we liked our superintendent and said we would leave with him. Next morning the newspaper headlines read, 'Thirteen Ritenour Teachers Strike.'"

Board minutes for May 23, 1916, contain this account of the problem: "The question of the reinstatement of teachers at Ritenour School was discussed. Mr. Etherton taking exception to several statements purported to have been made by the president of the board, among them one that Mr. Etherton was responsible that the old teachers had resigned. This brought up something of a 'range.' Mr. Etherton volunteering to have the teachers at the next meeting to disprove Mr. Robinson's remark."

A week later the board met again, with "Mr. Etherton stating as per agreement he and the teachers were present and ready to be questioned. Mr. Robinson stated he had no questions to ask, however if any teacher wished to make a statement they could do so. Whereupon each of the following teachers testified in various phrases that they had not been influenced by Mr. Etherton in refusing to consider a position next year. They also asked the chair to state, after hearing their statements, that he was convinced that Mr. Etherton could not influence their actions. This he would not do. Those appearing were Mr. White, Misses Lide, Reith, Morris, Nixon, Pinder, Boisseau, Smith and Sender. Mr. Wurdack stated nothing had been done by the three new members of the board to oust the teachers."

On June 13 the board received a petition calling for another election on bonds to build a school in Midland Heights. They also received a letter from the state superintendent, stating that the high school classes had received third-class approval. Finally, the board urged the superintendent to arrange for public exercises for eighth-grade graduation, which he opposed as "harmful and improper." Reluctantly, the board cancelled plans for the ceremony to have been held three days later in Comus Hall.

The following day the Democratic Party held its national convention in St. Louis and re-nominated Woodrow Wilson. His slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War," won his re-election by attracting the votes of thousands of women in states which had recently approved women's suffrage.

Bussing of Negro Students Considered

At the Aug. 22 meeting Mr. Carter came before the board for the second time and "wanted to know if there was going to be any provision made for his children to go to school this term." (His children had previously attended the Lackland Avenue School which was closed when the new Elmwood School was built in 1915) Almost every meeting from August until February 1917 included some discussion of this question. At one point it was thought that the board might provide transportation for Negro students who lived some distance from Elmwood. Weber Motor Company agreed to provide a two-week demonstration of their truck for this purpose for \$5 a day. The trial period was declared "a good success," but no action was taken by the board and the minutes for the next several years contain no further reference to the education of Negro children from the Lackland Avenue area.

Less than a month after the 1916-17 term began, Richmond resigned to become superintendent of the Maplewood schools. He was replaced by A. H. Bickel of Tarkio.

A bond issue for a school in Midland Heights was again defeated on April 3, 1917, in an election held in Knoblock's Barber Shop. New board members F. M. Bender, John A. Culver and O. W. Goodin were installed on April 6, the day the U.S. officially entered World War I. At that meeting, a group of visitors from Elmwood Park requested the reinstatement of classes there for high

school students. They were told to return a month later with their request in writing. When they did so, the superintendent told the delegation that the slate had just approved legislation which would establish a high school in Clayton for all Negro students in St. Louis County.

Later in the month the board was notified that they were being sued because of their payment of \$1,000 interest on the \$23,000 worth of bonds sold in May 1915. One board member said he had talked with the attorney representing the tax payers in the suit instigated against the issuance of the bonds and though the board should also hire him "as he is already interested in the case." No one seemed to suspect that this might constitute a conflict of interest on the part of the attorney. Although one board member felt "they should get a stronger lawyer than Lashley" it was voted to hire him to contest the suit against the board.

The 1917 enumeration showed 738 children of school age in the district. Arrangements for the first summer school classes were made when Miss Lena Morris requested the use of one room for a six-week summer term for several pupils who wanted to attend. Her request was approved with the understanding that she would be responsible for the care of the books and the building.

At a meeting in June 1917 the board voted to offer two high school scholarships to students living in the Normandy District and one each to residents of the Mt. Olive, Central, Mt. Pleasant and Kinloch districts. The old Lackland Avenue School was sold for \$65, and tuition for 1917-18 was set at \$20 for the primary grades, \$25 for grades 4-7 and \$40 for eighth grade and high school. At the next meeting however, these figures were lowered to \$15, \$20 and \$30, respectively.

Various problems awaited the board in September. The Presbyterian Church lodged a complaint that the sidewalk in front of Home Heights School had been installed on Sunday, the superintendent reported severe overcrowding in all schools and the teacher from Elmwood requested the installation of electric lights. (The superintendent decided that the provision of an oil lamp would be sufficient.)

First Night School Classes Established

In December 1917 the board approved the use of the school building for evening classes for boys who had had to drop out of school to go to work. Miss Morris taught the classes each Tuesday and Friday evening for a monthly tuition of \$3. In the interest of propriety, a board member was present at each session.

As 1918 began, America was singing "K-K-K-Katy," "After You've Gone" and "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." On Jan. 4 the board held a special meeting to discuss their appeal of the case brought against them for payment of interest on the bonds sold in May 1915. Their decision was to request that the case be heard by the Missouri Supreme Court.

Later in January the district was notified that its high school classes were now rated first class. In February there was less welcome news - notice of a suit filed against the board by its former secretary, G. M. Ringen,

who had been responsible for the safe keeping of the ballots from the May 1915 election.

Activities related to the war effort began to receive frequent notice. In February the superintendent reported that several teachers had volunteered to assist the Ferguson Draft Board, and in March the board president stated that he had prepared a roll of all the men in the district who were in the army. The board voted to purchase a frame for the list and to hang it in Ritenour School near the service flags. The Voters League purchased a similar flag, which they presented to Elmwood School. The board voted to purchase the necessary ingredients for the domestic science classes to bake cakes and bread "and sell same to help out the Junior Red Cross." The board approved the purchase of \$8,000 worth of Liberty Bonds with "some of the sinking funds" and granted the request of the Girls' Patriotic League to use the schoolhouse every Tuesday night (provided they could find a married woman to serve as their chaperone).

At the April 23 meeting, Superintendent Bickel announced that John Millian, president of Hardin College in Mexico, Mo., would be the commencement speaker on the topic, "Why We Are at War." Later in the meeting, Bickel told the board he had signed up as a YMCA secretary in France and would leave the next week. Before he left, he sold the board his typewriter for \$25.

Miss Florence Wuensch, principal of the high school, was one of two candidates to replace Bickel. She was hired as acting superintendent for the remainder of the term at a salary of \$105 per month, \$30 less than she had requested. Less than three weeks later, a board member reported that "a Mr. Smith" had told him Miss Wuensch was pro-German. Someone went to find the man and brought him to the board meeting, where he repeated the statement.

At another meeting the following night, Miss Wuensch "made a statement as to her loyalty which seemed to satisfy all board members." However, only two of them voted to retain her as superintendent. Instead, the job went to B. S. Stearns of Webster Groves for \$162.50 per month.

Ritenour's first graduating class of four girls received their diplomas in a ceremony at Comus Hall on May 17, 1918. The graduates included Lillian Elgasser, who still lives in Overland, Laura Ryder Greer of Norris City, Ill., Florida Lindhorst Blaisdell of Coronado, Calif., and Norene Wright, who with her twin sister Lorene died in the great influenza epidemic in the fall of 1918.

In a letter written on the 50th anniversary of her graduation, Mrs. Blaisdell gave her recollections of the ceremony, as follows: "Outside Comus Hall a May thunderstorm raged; inside, the hall was hot and humid and packed to capacity. The girls wore white voile dresses made in Miss Waugh's sewing class. World War 1 was at its peak and the class decided to make the dresses as an economy measure."

A few days before the 1918-1919 term opened, Stearns took a position with Simmons Hardware Company and was replaced by H. M. Hinkle of Illinois. For \$1,600 a year he agreed to serve as superintendent, teach manual

training and "look after physical exercise and sports."

At the Sept. 10 meeting the board's attorney told them he was appealing two cases filed against board members and needed to post bonds, which the board approved. At about the same time it was reported that the suit filed by Mr. Ringen had been "squashed."

September 1918 marked the beginning of the influenza epidemic which traveled westward across Europe, and on to the United States. Nearly one billion persons fell ill and 20 million died, including 500 thousand in the U.S. On Oct. 8, Dr. Eggers ordered the closing of Ritenour schools for an indefinite period of time. Classes resumed late in November but were closed again a few days later when the superintendent reported 73 pupils missing at Home Heights, one teacher ill at home and another in the hospital. Nearly three months of school were missed because of the epidemic. Among the students who died was Miss Lorene Wraight, the only member of the 1918-19 senior class.

Interest in Athletics Increases

With the war and the influenza epidemic over, 1919 brought a resurgence of interest in school athletics. In April the superintendent advised the board that he "had secured a coach and wished the board could shoulder the expense of same." He also reported that "the Athletic Association is working hard to secure funds for a

ballground." The board was also requested to purchase five typewriters so that commercial courses could be offered the following year to some 20 students. As a special activity to end the 1918-19 school year, the board offered prizes of \$5 and \$2.50 for a Declamatory Contest and \$1 each to the best spellers in grades five, six and seven.

In October 1919 teachers asked for and received a \$10 per month raise, and the superintendent's salary was increased to \$2,000 per year. Later in the month there was a special meeting to discuss the state warrant issued against a high school teacher charged with striking a female student. The teacher was present and "gave his version of the occurrence, which convinced board members that he was acting within proper bounds." Two board members were appointed "to lay the matter before their attorney and authorize him to defend the teacher in court, the case being set for Oct. 23." The teacher was acquitted.

By 1920, things were definitely looking up. The most serious matter facing the PTA was "the muddy condition of the Ritenour schoolyard, especially after thaws." After a lengthy discussion of the tax levy for the coming school year, the board decided "to ask the public for the limit, to wit \$1 school tax for incidental expenses." A 15-cent increase for the building repair fund was also on the ballot on April 6. Both levies were approved. The affairs of the school district were once again on an even keel, ready for the 36-year era of progress which began with the hiring of Superintendent Arthur A. Hoech on May 14, 1920.

The Hoech Years: 1920-1956

To a country recovering from involvement in a world war and a school district coming to the end of a decade of financial difficulties, burgeoning enrollment and bitter internal conflicts, the year 1920 was a momentous one. Women finally got the vote, and Station KDKA in East Pittsburg provided the first nationwide radio service when it reported the election of Warren G. Harding. A young baseball player named Babe Ruth was sold to the New York Yankees, a struggling team that rented the Giants' Polo Grounds for their home games, and Arthur A. Hoech was hired as Ritenour's superintendent at the salary of \$2,500 for a ten-month term. It was a relationship that was to last for 36 years.

Just three weeks after Hoech's appointment, Miss Mabel McCallister was hired as principal of Home Heights School. Her name, too, was to be linked to Ritenour's history for almost half a century.

In preparation for the 1920-21 term, the salary of substitute teachers was raised from \$3 to \$5 a day, and Hoech reported the formation of a rifle club and a basketball team.

In January 1921 a Mr. Carter, a long-time resident of the school district, spoke to the board "on behalf of his children who live too far to send to Elmwood, asking the board to pay for sending them to Bridgeton School, outside our district. The subject was thoroughly discussed and Mr. Devine (the board secretary) was instructed to consult with County Superintendent Russell as to our being legally permitted to pay said expense."

On Feb. 24 the board held a special meeting to consider the possibility of buying a new school site in Charlack as the location for a high school building. On Sunday,

March 13, board members met Edward Gocke in Charlack to inspect several lots he had for sale. On the spot, they settled a deal for parts of Blocks 35 and 36 at the price of \$8.80 per frontage foot.

A flyer prepared to explain the need for a high school building pointed out that Ritenour's enrollment had increased 20 per cent from 1916 to 1920. About 400 students were enrolled in Ritenour School, 336 in the eight elementary rooms and 62 in the four high school rooms. The first grade had 53 pupils in one room, while other elementary classes ranged in size from 40 to 46.

Only six graduates were anticipated in 1921, but the flyer noted that about 20 Ritenour students attended high schools in other districts, at a minimum tuition of \$100 per year. Hoech felt that the need for a separate high school was crucial. The space used for high school classes was badly needed for elementary students. If the high school program was discontinued, he said, parents would either have to pay tuition elsewhere or their children would have to do without a high school education.

In late March, board members visited the Harvard and Pershing schools in University City, accompanied by representatives of the William B. Ittner architectural firm, with whom they discussed plans for the high school building.

On April 8 the board was notified that "such members as find it convenient to attend should be present at Clayton Courthouse at the meeting called by County Superintendent Russell on April 9 to consider Senate Bill No. 63, which is now a law and provides for the establishment of a colored high school or the payment of tuition to the City of St. Louis High School."

On April 26 representatives of the PTA, the Overland Business Men's Association, the Charlack Improvement Association and the Voters' League met to discuss the proposed \$65,000 bond issue. And on May '10 the bond issue was approved by a margin of only 32 votes. Though the margin of victory was a narrow one, it set a precedent that was to become the greatest source of pride to Hoech. During his 36 years at Ritenour, each of the 15 bond issues proposed was passed, providing the growing district with \$4,341,000 for new buildings and additions.

Even with this fine beginning of a new decade, however, problems were not over. Just nine days after voters' approval of the bond issue for the high school, four district residents filed suit in the Circuit Court to "restrain the transfer of the location of the proposed high school to the extreme eastern portion of the said Ritenour Consolidated School District until such time as the matter has been duly presented to the resident voters and taxpayers ." They argued that the site was remote from residential areas and far from traveled roads. Because of this action, the National Bank of Commerce, which had been prepared to purchase the bonds, withdrew their offer.

Bond Issue Again Approved

Again, Hoech went to the community to plead for the high school he wanted so desperately, and on Oct. 11 the \$65,000 bond issue was again approved, this time by a vote of 914 to 392. Pleasure was short-lived, however, as the district again met difficulty in selling the bonds. Twenty-one companies received information about purchasing the bonds, but only one bid on the full amount and their bid arrived after the deadline because it was mailed to the wrong address. Although the board urged them to submit a second bid, company officials declined to do so upon the advice of their attorney, who had investigated the financial problems experienced by the district during the preceding years.

The new year arrived with no further progress toward the new high school, the threat of a smallpox epidemic and Ku Klux Klan activity so violent in the Midwest that the state of Oklahoma was placed under martial law. The Home Heights PTA was "authorized to connect a motion picture machine," and Hoech complained to the Business Men's Association about the sale of cigarettes to boys no older than nine or ten.

By late January 1922 the board had managed to find another company that agreed to purchase the bonds, provided the opponents of the bond issue would sign a statement that they would instigate no further litigation to interfere with the high school building.

By spring things were looking brighter. Mrs. E. May Jost became the first woman to win a seat on the Ritenour Board of Education, and ten days later the Circuit Court decreed that there was no legal obstacle to the sale of the bonds. The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C., and Reader's Digest was founded.

Still, there were immediate problems in housing the ever-growing enrollment. In August the board purchased two portable frame buildings to house the overflow - a three-room structure to be placed on the Ritenour

schoolgrounds and a one-room building for the Home Heights site. It was agreed that teachers for the 1922-23 term should have five sick days at full pay and five days at half pay , but the board reserved the right to cancel the agreement at any time .

During the summer of 1922, Miss Edith McCallister was hired as secretary to the superintendent. Like her sister, Mabel, she would be a district employee until 1966.

In September the board treasurer sent paid-off building bonds to the state auditor for registration, but he refused to accept them . Mandamus proceedings were promptly instituted against the auditor. A week later residents of the northwest part of the district presented a petition calling for a grade school in the vicinity of East Ashby and the board agreed to pay \$160 each for two Elmwood students to attend high school in St. Louis .

About this time a young Finnish architect named Saarinen, unknown in the United States, took second prize in a design competition conducted by the Chicago Tribune. Nearly a half-century later, the stainless steel arch designed by his son would be completed on the St. Louis riverfront.

The year 1923 dawned with the country singing "Yes, We Have No Bananas," "Who's Sorry Now" and "Charleston."

In March, nearly two years after they were first approved, the bonds were finally sold. Six bids for construction of the high school were received on May 1, but all exceeded the \$65,000 available. In mid-June an additional \$25,000 in bonds were approved by a vote of 191 to 20.

Less than three weeks after this election, the PTAs of Ritenour and Home Heights schools and the High School Alliance officiated at a ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the new high school. A few days earlier, the board held a special meeting to consider five possible sites for a new grade school in "the western part of the district." Their choice was a parcel of land at the corner of Midland and Marion (now Sims Avenue).

As the 1923-24 term began, Miss Celia Dennis a senior student was approved by the board to serve as high school librarian in exchange for her annual tuition of \$39.

The spring of 1924 was marked by at least two major events. Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" was performed for the first time, and both seniors and eighth graders objected strenuously to the board's decree that they would receive their diplomas in a joint ceremony.

Members of the senior class who signed a letter of protest to the board were Dorothy Schrick, Naomi Thomas, Charlotte Krochman, Dorothy Wagner, Jessie Sidebotham, Ruth Mellis, Fred Cronstedt Wallace Jacobs, Ed Ryder, Carl Wende, John Lindsay, Celia Denni; and Ida Oliverson.

Even a letter from the mother of an eighth-grade girl, emphasizing that "the poor dears and their mothers are somewhat distracted with the fooling around regarding the ceremony," failed to sway the board and the mass graduation was held as scheduled.

When the new school year opened in September, enrollment totalled 1,303, and the board requested an architect to prepare plans for Marion and Midland schools. (Midland was built on land acquired when the senior high site was purchased.)

The high school opened its doors, and Hoech immediately applied for its admission to the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The PTA used the new building for a box supper, dance and spelling bee, where prizes were won by Charles Jost and a Mr. Beekhaus.

The superintendent's report for December 1924 showed an enrollment of 1,307, one truancy, 435 cases of tardiness, 11 instances of corporal punishment and 40 visitors. He noted that the ice storm of Dec. 19 cut attendance by 80 per cent, that the electric lights and bells had not worked for a week and that all schools had been without water for three days.

Just after the Christmas holidays a fire in the roof of the Home Heights School caused classes there to be dismissed temporarily. On Jan. 20 a \$70,000 bond issue for the two new elementary schools was approved by a vote of 494 to 51.

The boys' basketball schedule for the winter of 1925 included games with Clayton, Maplewood, Wellston, Webster Groves and University City, schools which made up the County League. Clayton downed Ritenour 18-9, and the Wellston boys scored a 33-8 victory. Ritenour's girls upheld the school's honor, however, with their 41-5 defeat of Wellston.

In February Hoech told the board that the North Central evaluation of the high school found its science labs "far below standard." He recommended the immediate expenditure of \$100 for the botany lab and \$450 for the physics lab, but the board voted "to wait until next year." Later in the month, the superintendent presented a proposed budget of \$72,784.65 for the 1925-26 school year.

In March approval was requested for the basketball team to participate in a three-day tournament at Washington University. The request was accompanied by the less-than-optimistic observation that "if they lose their first game, they will miss only one day of school."

The year 1925 was a notable one for the field of literature, with the publication of Arrowsmith, An American Tragedy, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and *The Great Gatsby*. Ritenour's board did not smile unanimously upon the arts, however. They denied a request that Home Heights children be permitted to practice during the school day for the monthly PTA program at the GEM Theater, noting that there were frequent complaints that the music teacher devoted little time to the rest of the school music program.

Thirty-Two Graduates in 1925

In March it was reported that 28 high school students would have the required 16 credits at the end of the school year. Four others who had a fraction more than 15 credits were also approved for graduation. The superintendent's monthly report to the board noted that "the basketball

team made great improvement under the able coaching of Mr. Blanchard even though they won no games. At the county spelling contest on March 21, Melanie Mueller represented Ritenour grade schools and Cornelia Krell the high school. The former was eliminated because she failed to dot the i's and the latter because she misspelled 'kimono'."

A letter from Charles A. Lee, State Superintendent of Schools, suggested that the following improvements needed to be made: "Several teachers have more pupils than they can do justice to. Thirty-five is a good room. Your grade principals should be relieved of teaching. Floors should be kept well oiled. Tan duck shades should replace green ones, as they wear out."

In the summer of 1925 the big news story across the country was the trial of John Scopes, a Tennessee teacher arrested for teaching the theory of evolution. Clarence Darrow served as his defense lawyer, and William Jennings Bryan prosecuted the case.

Back at Ritenour, the superintendent asked permission to hire a school nurse for three days a week at the monthly salary of \$90. The board apparently took no action on this recommendation, and Hoech then suggested that perhaps the PTAs would bear the expense, which they did. (The support of the PTAs in those years was remarkable. In 1924, for example, the senior high PTA donated \$2,504.84 to the school cafeteria and \$901.25 to other school projects.)

In October Ritenour teachers formed a Community Teachers Association affiliated with the Missouri State Teachers Association. The senior high enrollment in November totaled 201, including 98 freshmen, 45 sophomores, 24 juniors and 34 seniors. On Armistice Day a Mr. Kiskadden, a Civil War veteran, spoke at a high school assembly.

Board notes for April 1926 refer to a procedure which, though apparently legal, suggests questionable ethics. A number of teachers were employed that year at an annual salary of \$981. When the board discovered that the state would pay a \$50 bonus to the district for every teacher whose salary was \$1,000 or more, they voted a \$19 bonus for each of the staff members in question, thus raising their total pay to \$1,000. In the process, the board netted \$31 profit per teacher. Elsewhere, Richard E. Byrd made his first flight over the North Pole.

August found the district still short of classroom space and they again rented the Presbyterian Church for a charge of \$25 per month, plus the cost of coal,

The following month the board found itself short of money to pay teachers and meet the interest due on the bonds for the high school. They approved a transfer of money from the building fund, to be repaid when state funds arrived.

For some time the board had worried about the safety of children crossing St. Charles Rock Road to reach Home Heights School. In October their attorney advised them it was legal to hire a traffic guard for this intersection, and they employed Edward Kelling at the salary of \$1 per hour.

At their December meeting, a board member recommended that Dr. Winfield Scott Hall be permitted to speak to high school students on sex hygiene, but his motion died for lack of a second. At the same meeting they approved the purchase of class rings and 14 football letters and asked the superintendent "to write to Mrs. Sprinkler for copies of a book and blotters for inspection to determine whether these things should be placed in the different schools by the Loyal Temperance Union." (Several months later the board decided against this action.)

Just after Christmas the board instructed the superintendent "to ask for the resignation of a teacher who was married over the holidays." They also stated that a rule against married teachers was to be included in contracts for the next year.

As 1927 dawned, the most popular tunes in the country were "Blue Skies," "Ol' Man River" and "The Varsity Drag," and the very first Academy Award for best movie went to "Wings." In February a \$58,000 bond issue for additions of four rooms each to Marion and Midland schools and the repair of other buildings was approved 252-42.

A Reverend Bullock was given permission to take a religious census in three elementary schools, but the board denied his request to use the school's "picture machine" to show slides to his Sunday school classes. The superintendent's request to attend the National Education Association convention in Dallas was approved, provided that his expenses for the five-day meeting did not exceed \$100!

No Special Rates for Students

Many of the children who attended Home Heights traveled to and from school by streetcar. Although the distance for most of them was not great, a transfer point at DeHart Station meant that they had to pay two fares, a fact that greatly agitated their parents. At a board meeting on March 8, a representative of the United Railway Company explained why special rates couldn't be provided for students who lived west of DeHart Station.

In April the board learned that "three boys had torn out half of the east wall and part of the front and west walls of the Marion School garage." A board committee was appointed to deal with the parents of the culprits. A request of the Patrons Alliance to hold card parties in the high school gym was approved, provided that no prizes were awarded.

Toward the end of the school year, the PTAs requested that each child be permitted to contribute a penny for a present for the music teacher. The board refused, saying that it did not approve of collections. They donated \$75 for music for the school picnic and complained to the prosecuting attorney that charges against persons arrested for traffic violations at the Home Heights school crossing were being dismissed without trial.

On May 21, 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh was greeted by a crowd of 100,000 when he landed in Paris in his monoplane, The Spirit of St. Louis, after the first solo flight across the Atlantic. A former resident of the Home Heights community, Lindbergh had piloted a plane from

which an aerial photo of Home Heights school was taken on Oct. 2, 1920.

The concerns of the board were varied. At successive meetings in the spring of 1927 they "informed the managers of various ball teams using the school athletic grounds that the practice of using any part of the grounds for toilet purposes must stop," invited John L. Bracken, superintendent of the Clayton School District, to serve as commencement speaker, and discussed the installation of electric lights in the Elmwood community.

At the beginning of the 1927-28 term the board approved the admission of children to school at the beginning of each semester and voted to install hot water showers "for the benefit of the football boys." O. W. Costilow was hired as high school principal, a position he held until 1960. (The present senior high fieldhouse is named in his honor.) And it was voted to send Negro high school students to school in Webster Groves, where the tuition was \$125 per year, compared to the \$160 the board had been paying for these students at Sumner High School.

That fall the board hired a reading supervisor for grades one and two at \$150 a month, purchased \$10 worth of music for the high school orchestra directed by a Mr. Fifield of St. Louis, and voted that the Midland PTA should purchase basic playground equipment for the school, "as other PTAs have done."

On Feb. 7, 1928, a \$72,000 bond issue for a high school addition and the purchase of sites for Iveland and Marvin schools was approved 274 to 38. The board also bought a piece of land on the north side of Page Boulevard, just east of Woodson Road, which they expected to use for another elementary school.

In the spring they accepted an offer from the Overland Lions Club and all of the PTAs to build a fence around the high school athletic field and approved a request that the PTAs be permitted to enter into a contract with a dairy company for installation of large refrigerators in the school cafeterias. In September the superintendent was instructed to hire a school nurse, if he could find one for \$175 per month, including transportation.

The year 1929 saw major novels by Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. The popular song, "Happy Days Are Here Again," was an apt theme for the Ritenour District. A \$69,000 bond issue for the construction of New Overland School was approved 277 to 30 on Feb. 12.

By late spring, however, the first hints of economic problems on the horizon began to be apparent. The board ruled that the monthly salaries of elementary teachers should be limited to a maximum of \$140, and the nurse, hired just seven months earlier, was dropped. In the summer of 1929 the district-owned property on Page Boulevard was leased to "a Mr. Crawford for a golf course."

The stock market crash in October marked the beginning of a decade of economic depression. More than

1,300 banks were to close during the year that followed. Despite this discouraging trend, however, a \$37,000 bond issue for additions to Marvin School was approved on Feb. 11, 1930, by a vote of 278 to 13. Later in the spring Miss Helen Laurie was rehired as reading supervisor at the rate of 68 cents per pupil per year. H. C. Walker was employed as writing supervisor for 20 cents per pupil. His duties included grading four sets of handwriting specimens for each student, making charts for every classroom and giving free correspondence lessons to teachers who needed help in this area.

In the fall of 1930, Miss Edith Hecht, who had graduated from Ritenour Senior High a few months earlier, was hired as a secretary in the superintendent's office. Ten years later, the board granted special permission for her to continue in her job after her marriage to Kenneth Lewitz. (She retired in June, 1977 after 47 years of service to the Ritenour District.)

By October 1930, Midland School was so crowded that sixth graders were transferred to Home Heights. Dr. F. E. Germane of the University of Missouri at Columbia was given permission to conduct an after-school extension class for teachers. On the days these classes were to be held, Dr. Germane and his wife worked with teachers in the classroom to improve their instruction in reading and grammar.

February 1931 brought another bond issue. A \$75,000 proposal to build a high school cafeteria and an addition to New Overland School squeaked by with just eight votes to spare.

On April 10, 1931, Edward L. Wyland was sworn in to fill a two-year vacancy on the board of education. He was to hold a seat on the board for 41 years, a record in the state of Missouri. At the first meeting Wyland attended, the board voted to pay bills totaling \$15,530.31 "when we get the money." They were also holding the checks for \$1,502.52 in bills approved the previous month.

Funds Transferred to Pay Bills

Minutes of the April 21 board meeting include this account: "Motion made by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Umstatt that in view of the fact that the regular fund of this district has been depleted from sources of which the new members of the board are not familiar with and the fact that the school boards in the past have used money in the sinking fund and bond issue funds to pay salaries when other funds were not available but since the employees of the schools are entitled to their salaries I therefore move that if needed to finish the salaries this year this board use the money in the sinking fund amounting to \$10,000 and not more than \$15,000 in the bond issue fund and that it be strictly understood the amount taken from these funds are to be replaced immediately after funds are received from any sources and that it is recorded herein that myself (Mr. Powers), Mrs. Lindsay and Mr. Wyland are absolutely opposed to this sort of action with these particular funds but under the circumstances do herein agree in this case for the sake of giving to those who have no control over the circumstances. Motion carried unanimously."

The financial situation was no better by fall. On Sept. 8 the board voted to pay teachers' salaries for one-half

month, the other half to be paid when sufficient funds were available. In November the board approved the payment of up to \$5 per month for transportation for Negro students who attended Sumner High School. Records indicate that eight students from the Carter, Catlin, Hill, Lawrence, Madison and Payne families were covered by this provision.

In December the board voted to pay \$1 each for board members, the superintendent and principals to attend the annual school board convention banquet, "rather than the larger amount allowed by law."

Early in 1932 the board decided that they would pay the rental charge for caps and gowns for commencement exercises, noting that "anyone who refuses to wear them cannot participate." An indication that times were hard and employment scarce is the fact that of the 18 persons hired to take the school census in 1932, 16 were men. They received nine cents per name for each child about whom they collected information.

In the summer of 1932, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly the Atlantic alone, and the Democrats, meeting in Chicago, nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt for P resident, with John Nance Garner of Texas as his running mate.

In August the board secretary was instructed to write the following letter to the Missouri Attorney General: "A problem has arisen in our school board which we cannot solve. At a meeting about June 1930 the then member of the board, on motion carried by the board, supplied certain stationary and did some printing for the board. The work was accepted by the board, being satisfactory in every way, but when the bill for this work, amounting to \$40, was presented for payment, the board refused to authorize the same, objection being that no member of the school board had a right to do any work for the school board of which he was a member. At the last school election the member who did the printing went off the board and now insists that this bill be paid. If it is not paid soon he will compel the board to pay the same by court action." More than four years later, board minutes indicated that the former member had been notified that his bill had been "outlawed" and could not be paid.

Several items made the news in the fall of 1932. Roosevelt was elected in a landslide, one of the most popular songs across the country was "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" Ritenour's football team was permitted to travel to Fulton for a game, and the board denied a request to advertise a particular hair dressing in the schools. In December the Overland Sea Scouts were given permission to build a boat in the New Overland gym, and the board accepted a life-size portrait of Mary Baker Eddy and a subscription to the Christian Science **Monitor** for the high school library.

Depression Worsens

By 1933, 200,000 teachers had lost their jobs throughout the United States and 2.3 million students were not attending school. Ritenour's board ruled that they would hire no more elementary teachers without a bachelor's degree and that non-degree teachers already employed must earn at least six college credits per year

until they received a college diploma. In February the board approved the purchase of a 11/2- ton Ford truck and battery, at a price "not to exceed \$75, plus the cost of the battery." That spring the school property on Page Boulevard was rented to a Mr. Pratt for a garden.

Hard times continued. Salaries of all professional staff for 1933-34 were reduced \$10 a month, with the provision that no one was to get less than \$100 per month. The salaries of all janitors making more than \$50 a month were reduced by ten per cent. All school children receiving free lunches were invited to a picnic given by the St. Louis County Free Lunch Service Association.

In September 1933 the portable building purchased many years before for the Overland School site was moved to a new location on Ashby Road to meet temporarily the growing need for a school at that end of the district. In November a \$60,000 bond issue for an addition to Home Heights School was approved 530 to 93. This was the first of many building projects in the district for which WPA workers were hired. In December 1933, 50 WPA employees and six teams of horses were used to grade the land around the senior high and Midland School. The district purchased the equipment they needed - 45 wheelbarrows, nine dozen shovels, one dozen axes and one dozen picks.

Board minutes for the depression years are filled with references to parents who appeared before the board to request that their children be permitted to continue in school, even though they were unable to pay their tuition. Not a single request was refused. At the beginning of the 1934-35 term, representatives of the Scudder and Bonfils districts asked for a reduction in the tuition they paid for students from their districts who attended Ritenour High School, and the cost was reduced by half.

In January 1935 board members were asked to take on the duties of the County Relief Employment Agency. A month later "Messrs. Kinkaid, Rekart and White interviewed the board regarding a school between Lackland and Page in the Iveland Subdivision." In April the board sent a letter to the Marion PTA, which was having financial difficulty in keeping their cafeteria in operation, saying that they considered the cafeteria essential to the health and welfare of children. However, the board said, if the PTA dropped the project, the district would attempt to find some way to keep it going.

Later that spring the board made plans to set up sight-saving classes in a portable building on the Iveland site. At the last minute, however, the teacher they had employed decided not to take the assignment and children with visual problems continued to attend a school in University City. During the Thirties and Forties, the Ritenour District paid the tuition for many children with physical and mental problems to attend special schools.

In May 1935 the board purchased for \$30,000 a 21.5 acre tract on St. Charles Rock Road, which many years later would be the location for a new high school. Lansing Clapp was hired to tend the large peach orchard which occupied the site.

Adult night classes financed by the federal government were begun in the fall of 1935, but when the teacher

failed to receive his salary for several months, the board gave him permission to collect a fee of ten cents per pupil per night. The land on Page Boulevard continued to be rented as a garden, with the board receiving half the profit.

Voters Approve Student Transportation

In April 1936 voters approved 514 to 118 a proposal to provide transportation for students in grades 7-12 who lived two miles or more from school. Contracts for the 1936-37 school year were issued to 103 teachers and principals. Salaries for classroom teachers ranged from \$85 to \$175 per month, "providing funds are available." The rule against married women teachers was waived for the employment of a new music supervisor.

In 1936, the portable school on Ashby Road included grades 1-4, the first five grades were offered at Overland, Midland and Iveland schools, Marvin included grades 1-6, Marion grades 1-7, New Overland grades 6-8 and Home Heights grades 1-8. The senior high PTA was permitted to purchase "bleachers" for the athletic field, Parents of Marvin students assigned to Home Heights and the parents of Negro children living on Baltimore and attending Elmwood School requested free transportation, but were told there was no provision for this in grades 1-6. In the fall of 1936 work began on a permanent building on the Iveland site and on an addition to Elmwood. Both were WPA projects.

In the spring of 1937, the board notified the Ashby School PTA that "due to unsatisfactory condition in which you left the building after your last meeting and because we do not allow dancing in any of the other grade schools, this practice must be discontinued. You may continue to hold Lotto games, but no dancing."

In preparation for the 1937-38 term, salary increases of \$5 to \$10 per month were granted, with the provision that married men with dependents were entitled to a larger amount. Adults who used typewriters at the senior high for night classes were required to pay 25 cents per month rental.

In November 1937 a delegation from Ashby School asked the board for a new building on their site. The board felt, however, that any new school should be farther north and east "on property known as Bell's Woods or Peterson's or Elgasser's property." Hugo F. Buder, the board president, was appointed to negotiate for appropriate property and finally settled on the area known as Bell's Woods.

In the summer of 1938 a \$50,000 bond issue was approved 220 to 5 for the addition of a library and study hall to the senior high. This, too, was a WPA project. Board minutes contain a list of hourly wages paid to these workers, as follows: bricklayer \$1.50; bricklayer apprentice, 50 cents; stone mason, \$1.25; truck driver, 80 cents.

The \$39,073 contract for Ashby School was let in November 1938. Buder died suddenly in March 1939, and the board voted unanimously to name the new school in his honor. It opened in the fall of 1939. The portable building on Ashby Road was sold to St. Luke's AME Church in Elmwood for \$400.

In the spring of 1939, the board notified the Ministerial Alliance that "while the board wishes to cooperate with the churches of the community in every possible way, we believe that the teaching by ministers of the different denominations in the school classrooms during school hours as proposed by the Ministerial Alliance is contrary to the spirit and Leaching of the American public schools." A few months later, they issued another statement that "the board does not look with favor upon the request of students to play cards during the noon play-time period."

The \$1.85 school tax levy, which had not varied since Hoech came to Ritenour 19 years earlier, failed by ten votes in the April 1939 election. In a second election in May, it was approved 582 to 36. For the 1939-40 term, the board employed two teachers "to work with backward children." In December the board sought a WPA grant for improvements at the new athletic field on St. Charles Rock Road. The cost of the rock house, a score board, a backstop and eight tennis courts was not to exceed \$12,000. The small white house on the grounds was repaired and rented for \$35 per month, this amount to be worked out in supervision of the field.

In the spring of 1940, Ritenour annexed part of the Scudder School District, where Kratz School is now located. Though the business of education continued as usual, the news from Europe was ominous. In April German troops invaded Norway and Denmark. A month later Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg fell.

The first salary schedule for Ritenour teachers was adopted for the 1940-41 term. It ranged from a beginning wage of \$120 per month to a high of \$170 for a teacher with a master's degree and 20 years' experience. In September representatives of an architectural firm attended a board meeting and asked to be considered when the board was ready to plan their new high school on the Rock Road site. It was to be a long wait.

In April 1941 the tax levy failed by three votes. Three weeks later it was approved 316 to 29. The following month it was voted to discontinue the junior-senior prom the following year because of small attendance. In June a Mrs. Marlowe and the Chief of the Elmwood Fire Department requested and received permission to hold picture shows at Elmwood School to raise money for the fire department.

Remedial reading classes and courses in speech and lip reading were added in the fall of 1941. Less than two weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the draft was extended to cover men from the age of 20 to 44. "Deep in the Heart of Texas" lost its place as most popular song to "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition."

In January 1942 a teacher was hired to instruct 100 boys in first aid, and driver's education was dropped for the second semester because it was feared the teacher, Leonard Provorse, would be drafted. The general rationing of food and materials necessary to the war effort began, and in February civil defense films were scheduled in the schools. In March all school employees received a ten per cent raise, with additional increases for the Elmwood staff to bring them up to the minimum paid white teachers. During the summer the FBI announced the capture of eight German saboteurs who were brought by submarine to Florida and New York, and the Ritenour board paid \$677.59 for the annual premium on \$645,328 of "war damage insurance."

The board announced that the high school tuition for 1942-43 would be \$85 and the elementary tuition \$70, "the actual per pupil cost last year." The December issue of **Pepper Box** carried a list of former Ritenour students now in military service and the board voted to send a copy to each of them. By this time, the draft age had been lowered to 18. Just after Christmas, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Casa Blanca, and Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed to head the North Africa campaign for the Allies.

More salary increases were approved in April. Principals received from five to ten per cent, except the Elmwood principal, who received a 25 per cent raise. Leaves of absence were approved for teachers going into military service. **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** was the most popular book of the year, and people were singing "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer," "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Mairzy Doats."

In the fall of 1943, the school district received federal funds to operate a War Time Child Care Center. St. Paul's Episcopal Church was rented for \$50 per month, and seven employees were hired. Schools were dismissed for three days in October for registration and issuance of Ration Book No. 4. School employees who helped with the project received free meals.

In November the DeHart sisters offered to the board for \$1,000 a tract of land at the corner of St. Charles Rock Road and Wismer Avenue. Conditions of the sale were that the property would be used for a school for white children and that the building was to be named the Lewis DeHart School, in honor of their father.

School Site in St. Ann Offered

While the board was considering this proposal, they received a letter from Charles F. Vatterott & Co., also offering a school site for sale. "Our efforts here are to develop this area as a community similar to St. Johns," the letter said. "The Village of St. Ann is becoming known more and more and at each opportunity we try to use the name of the subdivision to tie in the location. This is the reason we are desirous of calling it St. Ann's Public School, because we feel that we will have a good size community here like St. John Station, some day in the future if we all work in that direction." The site they proposed was on the north side of St. Charles Rock Road at Ashby. The board decided on the DeHart property and it was purchased early in 1944.

Salaries for the 1944-45 term were increased \$150 "as a war measure." In August the board agreed to pay the tuition of \$1,000 per semester for 40 senior high students to attend the new vocational school in Wellston. This was the forerunner of the outstanding vocational program offered today by the Special School District. In the fall, Gen. Douglas MacArthur led U.S. forces in a triumphant return to the Philippines and Roosevelt was elected to an unprecedented fourth term, despite the fact that 70 percent of the newspapers in the country supported Thomas E. Dewey.

The year 1945 saw the death of Roosevelt and the installation of Harry S. Truman, the drafting of the United Nations charter and V-J Day. The Ritenour board approved the continuation of the "Dog House" recreational program for teenagers at the high school on Saturday nights.

In the spring of 1946, Ritenour participated in the dental clinic sponsored by the Cooperating School Districts at a cost of \$800. A new state law required that tax levies be presented to voters in a different way, but Ritenour's tax rate remained \$1.85, unchanged since 1920. On March 5, 1946, Winston Churchill delivered his famous "iron curtain" speech at Westminster College in Fulton. The person in charge of arrangements for the historic event was Fulton's superintendent of schools, Wendell L. Evans. Three years later he was to come to Ritenour as Hoech's assistant.

The war years had brought a tremendous improvement in teachers' salaries. The schedule for 1946-47 ranged from \$1,400 to \$2,900 for teachers with a bachelor's degree. Merit pay was also instituted that year.

In the fall of 1946, the Buder Park Civic Association requested that a portable building be placed at Buder School for kindergarten classes. The board responded that they hoped to begin kindergarten in all buildings soon. Construction of a new high school would mean that the original high school building could become the district's first junior high. Moving the seventh and eighth grades out of the elementary schools would then make room for kindergarten classes.

In October the Dog House opened for another season with a new set of rules. Boys could leave for short periods of time during the evening and be re-admitted to the recreation center, but girls were not permitted to leave the gym. Anyone found sitting in a parked car was suspended from Dog House membership. More than 120 parents volunteered to serve as chaperones.

Bond Issue for New High School Approved

In December 1946, a \$630,000 bond issue for the new high school was approved 8.76 to 19, but there was to be a two-year delay before bids were received on the project. The \$2.45 tax levy submitted in April 1947 was defeated, but passed on the second try by a 5 to 1 majority. It was the first increase in 27 years. A young ballplayer named Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers, and transistors were invented.

In 1948 the maximum teacher's salary was increased to \$4,000, and Elmwood teachers were finally placed on the same scale as others in the district. The U.S. recognized the new state of Israel, and Truman was elected, even though early editions of the **Chicago Tribune** gave the victory to Dewey.

In the spring of 1949, the Scudder District released an additional area to Ritenour and the board discussed additions to Buder, Iveland, DeHart and the new senior high building, as yet uncompleted. In May Wendell Evans was hired as assistant to Hoech, who was then 68 years old. During the summer the board's attorney advised them that applications had been filed for trailer camps in the 8500 block of St. Charles Rock Road and on Warson Road at Olive. The board filed protest "on general principles."

In July a \$300,000 bond issue for building additions and repairs was approved 65 to 34, and the board received a bid of \$11,500 for their property on Page Boulevard near Woodson, which had been purchased many years before as a possible school site. Henry Lang, a member of the board for 16 years, resigned to take the newly created position of director of buildings and supplies, and

the board voted to let Hubert Wheeler, Commissioner of Education, know that they were not in favor of dismissing schools for a week in April so that teachers could take the federal census.

In October 1949, Miss Mabel McCallister was named administrative supervisor over Midland and Marvin Schools and Irwin Sweeney was put in charge of Elmwood, Iveland and Marion. This was necessary to meet AAA standards, because a number of the principals were not fully qualified to meet state requirements.

In January all after-school activities were discontinued and a telegram was sent to President Truman and Senator Forrest Donnell advising them of the effects of the coal shortage. "Less than two weeks' supply on hand," the telegrams said. "If not helped, we may have to close schools with 5,000 students. Please advise what action is being taken to relieve this emergency."

The following spring Miss McCallister was appointed director of elementary education for the district, although she continued as principal of Home Heights School, a position she had held for 30 years. For the first time the board adopted a written philosophy and objectives for elementary and secondary schools and policies relative to board operation, qualifications for the professional staff and other aspects of school administration.

In May James A. Painter was hired as the district's first junior high principal in anticipation of the opening of the new high school for the 1950-51 term. As Truman was ordering the U.S. Navy and Air Force to Korea, the Ritenour board was making plans to purchase land for its eleventh elementary school on Edmundson Road, and the district's first kindergarten classes were opened. That December a three per cent cost-of-living bonus was granted to all employees, a practice that was to continue for a number of years.

The Class of 1951, the first to graduate from the new high school, held their commencement ceremonies in the stadium, beginning a tradition that has continued to the present. That spring the board applied for federal funds for an addition to the new high school, which had a faculty of 24. The board refused a request by students to be permitted to smoke on the high school grounds.

The PTAs, which had operated Ritenour's school cafeteria since the 1920s, requested at the close of the 1950-51 school year that the board take over this operation in the fall and the board agreed to try. In June Rudy Brock was hired to head the cafeteria program, a position he would hold for nearly a quarter-century.

That fall the board approved hiring home teachers for crippled students, continuing their tradition of providing special education services free of cost to handicapped children. A \$175-per-year raise was granted to the kindergarten teacher at Iveland School, who worked with 93 students every day.

Ritenour Shares in TV Construction

The year 1952 saw an addition to the senior high fieldhouse and a new quonset building to handle the overflow at the junior high. That fall Hoech discussed the new educational television channel with the board and they agreed to pay Ritenour's share of the construction

Cost – \$5,504.86. Just before Christmas the board met with an architect to make plans for a second junior high on Ashby Road on a site that had been part of the Elgasser property. Additions to Marion, Midland, Elmwood, New Overland, Buder, DeHart and the senior high were also needed.

In January 1953, the Iveland PTA suggested to the board the formation of a Citizens Lay Advisory Committee. The following month a \$1.8 million bond issue for the new junior high, the new elementary school on Edmundson Road and additions to other buildings was approved by a vote of 2,542 to 75. An increase from \$2.45 to \$3 in the tax rate was also approved. The Ritenour PTA Council purchased a clock for the second floor of the senior high in memory of Mrs. E. May Jost, the district's first woman board member, and the Kiwanis clubs of Ritenour and Normandy proposed that a football game between the two high schools be scheduled for Thanksgiving Day.

By the fall of 1954, overcrowding had become a major problem. Two basement rooms at Buder were used as classrooms and the sixth graders were transferred to Home Heights. Basement rooms were also used at Iveland, and space at Peace Lutheran Church was rented for sixth graders at Kratz, the new school on Edmundson Road, which was named for board president Charles Kratz, who died in April 1950. Ritenour Junior High held classes at Midland and the Calvary Evangelical Church. Senior high classes met in the cafeteria and an area next to the boiler room.

On Aug. 12, 1954, the board discussed the integration of Negro and white pupils, but decided not to make any changes in the schools during that school year "because the Supreme Court has not made a final pronouncement and because Ritenour schools are already overcrowded." They noted, also, that teachers for the 1954-55 term had already been hired and that Elmwood teachers would not be needed if the students were integrated. Arrangements were made to send the 25 to 30 Negro high school students in the district to Webster Groves.

In October a \$650,000 bond issue was approved 914 to 37, and on Jan. 18, 1955, Hoech Junior High was opened with Painter as its principal. That spring the board discussed additions for the senior high and Iveland and the acquisition of a school site on Brown Road. In May the community celebrated Arthur A. Hoech Day, and the new junior high was dedicated in his honor. When the 1955-56 term began, special education classes for handicapped children were held in the little white house on the senior high site. In November a \$380,000 bond issued passed by a vote of 669 to 181.

Superintendent Hoech attended his last board meeting on Feb. 14, 1956, and died on March 12. The funeral was held in the junior high named in his honor ten months earlier. Immediately, representatives from the Citizens Lay Advisory Committee approached the board about setting up a scholarship in Hoech's memory and from this idea came the Ritenour Scholarship Fund for Future Teachers, which continues today.

Board minutes include the following eulogy of Superintendent Hoech: "Two thousand years ago our Master said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Mr. Hoech spent all of his adult life in the service of little children and youth, and it can be truly said that no child ever came to him or was brought to him for help, who did not go away better for having come to this kindly man. For Arthur A. Hoech, the last school bell was tolled and he has carried to his heavenly home a final report to lay at the feet of the greatest teacher of them all. For him there can be but one inscription recorded, for it will surely read: 'Welcome, good and faithful servant.'"

Arthur Hoech had guided the Ritenour District through 36 years of unprecedented growth, the worst depression in the country's history and a world war. When he arrived, there were 731 students taught by 22 teachers in three schools. In 1956, the enrollment was about 9,000, and there were 330 teachers in 15 buildings. The average teacher's salary increased from just over \$800 a year to more than \$4,000, the annual budget grew from \$30,021.53 to \$2,923,558.24, and the number of graduates jumped from four in 1920 to 306 in 1956. It was, without question, the end of an era.

Years of Change: 1956-1978

Wendell L. Evans, who had served as assistant superintendent during the last seven years of Arthur A. Hoech's 36-year term, was appointed to succeed Hoech, who died in March 1956. The first order of business was the acquisition of a ten-acre site on Brown Road for the construction of a new elementary school. The board's initial offer of \$25,025 was rejected by the owners, who were asking \$75,000. Condemnation proceedings were started, and the court-appointed commissioner appraised the land at \$35,000, but the price of \$65,000 was finally agreed upon out of court.

That summer, Jim Reynolds, later to become an assistant superintendent in the Ritenour District, was hired as an English, math and social studies teacher at Hoech Junior High. Ladue Local Lines agreed to transport students to and from school for \$21.30 each per year, and the board approved the preliminary sketches for the new primary wing to be added to Marvin School.

Jim Painter, the first principal of both Ritenour and Hoech junior highs, joined the Central Office staff as an administrative assistant in October. In December, the board signed a petition supporting Mayor Mort Jacobs' recommendation that sidewalks be installed along Woodson Road, and voters approved a \$2 million bond issue for the purchase of the Brown Road site, the construction of the new elementary school and repairs to other buildings.

In January 1957, Verna Smith a former editor of **Community News**, was hired to teach English at Ritenour Junior High and devote half-time to public relations duties for the school district. Ritenour was the first district in St. Louis County to appoint a public relations director to keep the community informed about school activities.

In the spring of 1957, the board raised the top salary for a teacher with a master's degree and 12 years'

experience to \$6,000, named Miss Mabel McCallister and Jim Painter assistant superintendents, and approved the use of the Hoech auditorium for a concert by Myron Floren, a local boy working as an accordionist with a band led by someone named Welk.

The annual school levy was approved on April 2 by a margin of just 42 votes. Overcrowding was a problem at all levels. Sixth graders from Marion were assigned to Buder for 1957-58 and the two upper grades from Marvin were transferred to New Overland. In an attempt to keep up with the ever-increasing enrollment at the senior high, the board made plans for six new classrooms, a second gym, a new cafeteria and the conversion of the original cafeteria to industrial arts shops.

In the fall, the new school on Brown Road was named in honor of Edward L. Wyland, then in his 27th year as a member of the board of education.

The following spring, the board voted to continue academic enrichment classes for talented secondary students and to hire additional teachers for the elementary enrichment program. One of those employed was Jerry Sandweiss, later to become assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education. Also hired in the summer of 1958 was George Chapman, who began his career with Ritenour as assistant senior high principal and was later to become assistant superintendent in charge of secondary schools.

While 1958 does not seem too long ago in the minds of some, a survey of board minutes indicates that there have been significant changes: a new Dodge station wagon was purchased by the district that year for \$1,745.

By this time, more than four years had passed since the U.S. Supreme Court ordered school integration. After

a lengthy discussion, the board voted to integrate grades K-2 in Ritenour schools in the fall of 1958, adding one grade a year after that until all elementary schools were desegregated. However, no action was taken concerning Elmwood, which remained all black, and Negro parents living elsewhere in the district were permitted to send their children to Elmwood if they chose to do so.

During the summer of 1958 the board adopted a "Failure to Work Rule," authorizing the superintendent to discharge without notice any employee who picketed or went on strike against the district.

Wyland Opens in 1958

Wyland School opened in September 1958, and the board made plans to sell the old Overland School, which it replaced. They were taken aback by a report that no title could be found for the site, which had been used for school purposes since 1847, but a new title was acquired. No buyers came forth, however, and the building was eventually remodeled for use as district administrative offices.

A \$1.3 million bond issue was approved in October by a majority of nearly 12-1. The board voted to provide additional phone lines for the junior and senior high schools, which previously had just one apiece.

In January 1959 the major topic of discussion was a proposal to join schools in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County into one giant district. The Ritenour Board of Education went on record as being "definitely opposed" to this plan.

In the summer of 1959, the senior high stadium was the setting for a pageant, "Overland Trails Golden Jubilee," which ran for 12 days. The board received preliminary plans for an addition to Marion School and awarded contracts for an addition to Ritenour Junior High. They also approved payment of \$961.62 as Ritenour's share of the cost of setting up a county vocational school in the old Country Day School building in Berkeley. Superintendent Evans was a leader in the group responsible for this project.

By the spring of 1960, district schools were bursting at the seams. Sixth graders from Buder were bussed to Marion, those from DeHart to New Overland, those from Home Heights to Wyland and those from Kratz to Marvin. The director of school building services for the State Department of Education said that "while many of the schools in the district are overcrowded, the most pressing problem is at the senior high." A \$1.5 million bond issue to relieve some of these conditions was approved in May, and that summer the board received plans for additions to Kratz, Home Heights, Midland and Buder.

The new field house at the senior high was named in honor of O.W. Costilow, principal for 33 years, who retired in June 1960. He was succeeded by George Chapman. The following spring Jerry Sandweiss was named principal of Marion School.

In 1961 the board approved additions for Hoech and Ritenour Junior highs, and the community approved a

\$400,000 bond issue. The possibility of a Junior College District for St. Louis County was discussed and tabled by the Ritenour Board.

A six-week summer school was held for the first time in 1962. By the following summer, nearly 900 students from 28 St. Louis County schools were enrolled.

In January 1964 Mrs. Ralph English, president of the Iveland PTA, appeared before the board to request permission to name the school's new all-purpose room in honor of its principal, Miss Lillian Kegelman. Later that spring, the board entered into a contract with the McDonnell Automation Center for computer processing of student schedules and grade reports.

In the fall of 1964, the bus company which transported Ritenour student informed the board they could no longer afford to run a bus to take only four or five elementary students from around the district to Elmwood. Parents of these children were told they must enroll them in the school nearest their homes. Parent-teacher conferences held at Marion and Marvin schools were reported to be so successful that the board voted to hold them in all elementary schools every semester.

In February 1965, a \$750,000 bond issue was approved by a vote of 2,854 to 579. Later in the year, the board expressed its approval of a new countywide vocational school to be operated by the Special School District.

Head Start and Title I Approved

In the fall, the board voted to participate in the Head Start program and to apply for Title I funds from the federal government to provide special remedial help for elementary students. Fourth-year Spanish, beginning Russian and full-year courses in woodworking and electronics were added to the senior high curriculum.

In November the board wrote to the City of Overland, warning city officials that the continued construction of apartment complexes would lead to the "dangerous overcrowding of school facilities and necessitate an increase in school taxes."

On Jan. 11, 1966, the board approved a resolution honoring Marvin E. Kuhn, a member of the board for 19 years, who died Jan. 5.

The summer of 1966 brought many changes in the district's administrative staff. The Misses Mabel and Edith McCallister, who served Ritenour for 46 and 44 years, respectively, retired in June. Jim Reynolds, who had spent half-time in the Central Office since January, became a fulltime administrative assistant. J. L. Moody, later to become Ritenour's eleventh superintendent, was hired as business manager. Jerry Sandweiss left the principalship of Marion School, where the PTA named the library in his honor to become director of elementary education, and Patty Williamson was hired as the district's first fulltime director of public relations.

In January 1967, Kratz School was damaged by a tornado. Later that spring the board approved hiring guidance counselors for the elementary schools, and the district was notified that nearly \$1 million in federal funds had been earmarked for the operation of a three-year

"model school" project at Wyland. Jim Reynolds was the author of the proposal.

During the summer of 1967, George Chapman was transferred to the Central Office as an administrative assistant, Otto McClintick, later to become business manager, was hired as an instructional consultant for the Model School program, and Millie Levy, who would later direct the district's Title I program, was also promoted from classroom teacher to instructional consultant.

In August, Edith Lewitz, a district employee since 1930, was named board secretary. When board member James A. Billington moved from the district that fall, Ralph R. English was appointed to replace him. A \$2.8 million bond issue approved in October provided funds for additions to the senior high, Midland and Marvin schools.

On Feb. 13, 1968, the board approved a resolution honoring Henry Lang who died the previous day. He was a board member from 1933 until 1949, when he resigned to begin a 17-year term as the district's superintendent of maintenance.

In April the new all-purpose room at Midland School was named in honor of the principal, Miss Ruth Smith. Bill Abrams ended a 10-year term on the board of education, and John S. Etherington, Jr., was elected to replace him.

During the summer of 1968, Superintendent Evans announced plans to retire the following June, and Jim Painter was named as his successor. In August the architect for the senior high additions told the board that projected costs were running much higher than anticipated and that it would not be possible to complete all the work with the bond money available. For several months the board debated the problem, before asking the public in the spring of 1969 to approve additional funds so that all the additions could be built as planned. When this failed, plans for the new auditorium were dropped and work proceeded on the gym and library.

On March 3, 1970, a 69-cent tax increase was soundly defeated. A few days later the board was told by its attorney that it had three alternatives: notify all teachers of their dismissal as of April 15; rehire them for the following year at the same salary; or issue contracts - including a salary increase, knowing that the money was not available.

In the April election, Dr. Bob Katsev defeated J. W. Peterson, who had served on the board for 17 years. Later in the month, the board paid tribute to H. D. Bernard, a board member for 11 years, who died on April 15. Larry Kuo was selected to fill the vacancy.

The 69-cent tax increase was presented for the second time in a special election on June 9. Although it received more than half the votes cast, it fell far short of the two-thirds majority required for passage. In a third election on Aug. 25, the proposal edged over 60 per cent, but still failed to reach two-thirds. The school calendar was suspended, another election was scheduled for Sept. 14

and plans were made to open schools on Sept. 15 if the levy was approved.

And More Elections

The number of voters in favor of the tax increase slipped back to 59 per cent in the Sept. 14 election. At a mass meeting at Wyland School after the results were known, teachers pleaded with the board not to reduce the amount requested and not to open schools until the levy was approved. The following day the board decided to open schools on Sept. 16 and to submit the levy for a fifth time on Sept. 30. Nearly seven months after it was first presented to voters, the \$4.77 levy was approved by a margin of only 233 votes out of 13,691 ballots cast.

With the financial problems settled, the board could again turn its mind to educational matters. They awarded a contract for a new all-purpose room and general remodeling at Elmwood School and approved an early graduation alternative for senior high students who completed requirements at the end of seven semesters.

In the spring of 1971 John and Eleanor Armbruster purchased the old Bell Telephone Building at the corner of Argyle and Woodson and presented it to the district as the first home of the Vo-Prep School, which opened in March. It was the first school in the country to provide pre-vocational education for junior high students. The new swimming pool at the senior high was opened, and soccer was added to the senior high sports schedule.

In November the new library at Kratz School was named in honor of the late Edward H. Myers, principal at Kratz from its opening in 1954 until his retirement in 1967.

In the spring of 1972, Edward L. Wyland ended a 41-year term on the Ritenour Board of Education, believed to be a record in the state. He served as vice president for eight years and as treasurer for 28. Elected to fill the vacancy was Mrs. Fran Kuhlmann, the fourth woman to serve on Ritenour's board.

Jim Paton, a board member since 1966, did not seek re-election in 1973. New board members elected that spring were Mrs. Rosemary Jennewein and Jim Pappas. Superintendent Painter announced that he would retire in June 1974, and the search for a replacement began.

The following March, the board announced the appointment of Dr. J. L. Moody, whose first project was a proposal to comply with an HEW directive to integrate Elmwood School. A plan calling for optional integration the first year was submitted in May and rejected by HEW in August. A second plan which divided Elmwood students among Wyland, New Overland and Iveland schools and transferred the V Prep School to the Elmwood building was implemented. Lossie Jones, former Elmwood principal, was transferred to the Central Office as administrative assistant to Dr. Jerry Sandweiss, Ron Fels, assistant principal at Hoech Junior High, was named to head a two-year ESEA Title V(c) project for long-range evaluation and planning for the school district. In the fall of 1974, elementary cafeterias began serving lunches to senior citizens.

In December a proposed 35-cent tax increase was approved by less than 40 per cent of the voters, and the

district began plans for ways to trim the cost of the school program. A citizens steering committee, appointed in February 1975, set to work to study the district's problems of declining enrollment, rising costs and decreasing income.

The first eleven graduates of the Armbruster Vo-Prep School received their diplomas on June 4. Later that summer the board approved plans for a radio station at the senior high and discussed the possibility of selling the Ritenour Administration Building to the City of Overland. However, the talks resulted in a stalemate, with the city offering \$50,000 for the property, for which the board asked \$150,000.

Kevin Billings, president of the Ritenour Senior Class of 1976, obtained the board's permission to present a bicentennial flag to fly over the senior high.

In late September, Faville Williams, chairman of the steering committee, presented several preliminary recommendations to the board, involving a possible tax increase and/or the closing of several elementary schools. The group's final report in December suggested closing two elementary schools and proposing a small tax increase. If the tax increase failed, as many as four schools might be closed.

Board Adopts Reorganization Plan

After additional input from the administrative staff, which favored a plan involving middle schools, the elimination of the junior high schools and the creation of a second high school, the board scheduled four community forums for February and March. On March 25, they approved a plan which retained the traditional grade structure and designated Home Heights, Midland and New Overland as the buildings to be closed. The Vo-Prep School was moved to New Overland, a central location more adequate for its needs.

In the April 8 election, Dave Bell was elected to the board, defeating Jim Pappas, who was seeking a second term.

During the summer of 1976, Ron Fels was appointed to head the expanded Community Education Program, housed in the former Home Heights School. Midland School was leased to the Special School District, and both Elmwood and the original Vo-Prep building were sold.

On the first day of school, enrollment was 9,744, a decrease of 960 from the previous year and more than 4,000 from the district's peak period in 1968. In the face of continuing enrollment decline and decreasing income, the board still had to deal with the desperate need for building repairs. In the fall they began to study recommendations prepared by an architectural firm to decide which items should receive priority and how they should be financed. The project continued to be discussed until May, when the board set Aug. 2 as the date of a special election to approve a transfer of funds within the \$4.77 tax levy, which would remain unchanged.

In the April 1977 election, Jim Pappas was re-elected to the board, replacing Jack Etherington, who did not seek a fourth term. Larry Kuo and Fran Kuhlmann were elected president and vice president, respectively, and one of the new president's first acts was to appoint board

members, administrators teachers and parents to serve on study committees in the areas of discipline and the educational program.

On July 1, 1977, Edith Lewitz retired as Ritenour's head bookkeeper and secretary to the board of education, ending a 56-year association with the school district as a student and employee. Billye Golding, the superintendent's secretary, was appointed to replace Mrs. Lewitz as board secretary.

The fund transfer was approved by nearly 86 percent of the voters in the Aug. 2 election, making about \$300,000 a year available for school repairs and renovation. By June 1978, nearly \$236,000 had been spent for roof repairs, blacktop work, painting, tuckpointing, the improvement of classroom lighting, new stage curtains for the senior high, the installation of dust collection systems in the junior high shops, new intercom units for two elementary schools and the purchase of uniforms for custodians, a dump truck and snow removal equipment.

The purchase of the snow removal equipment proved fortuitous, as the St. Louis area came within a few inches of breaking the all-time snowfall record and Ritenour schools were closed for seven days, the most in memory.

The school year opened with 8,942 students, a decrease of 802 from the previous year. By June, the enrollment had dropped by another 225 children.

But the educational program continued to improve and expand. The district received a grant of \$172,143 in state funds for Project Challenge, a program which provided special opportunities for academically gifted children in grades K-6. Nearly 400 students participated in the project, which was headed by DeeDee Katz.

The Ritenour Education and Employment Program (REEP) for young people was begun after Christmas at the Community Education Center. Its coordinator was W. D. Leip. Sparked by the first daytime sessions, enrollment in adult classes at the center climbed to more than 2,000 per semester. A unique, individualized business training program was added to the curriculum, and summer classes were offered for the first time in 1978.

In February the board adopted a resolution honoring John H. Armbruster, who died Feb. 16. He and his wife, Eleanor, were strong supporters of the Ritenour District during their more than 50 years in the community.

Fran Kuhlmann and Ralph English were re-elected to the board in April 1978. That spring the board voted to honor district employees with 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of service, and ceremonies were planned for early fall.

Commencement ceremonies for 700 seniors on June 7 brought the total number of Ritenour graduates to more than 19,600.

The Ritenour District continues to face the serious problems resulting from declining enrollment and increasing costs. But it is not a new experience. In the 132 years since the little Buck School opened at the crossroads of Woodson and Lackland, the district has weathered world wars, depressions, epidemics, election scandals and bitter community dissension. It has survived and grown stronger, establishing a tradition of educational excellence. The years ahead are a challenge that will add to that proud heritage.

Superintendents of Schools

Ritenour School District

Educators who, with capability and vision, have led the Ritenour School District from its log cabin days to the promise of the Twentieth Century and beyond.

E.E. Morton
Supervising Principal
1907-11

Perry S. Allen
1911-14

H.C. Ethenon
1914-16

Joshua Richmond
1916

A.H. Bickel
1916-18

B.S. Stearns
1918

H.M. Hinkle
1918-20

Arthur A. Hoech
1920-56

Wendell L. Evans
1956-69

James A. Painter
1969-74

J. L. Moody
1974-1984

John W. DeArman
1984-1995

Paul W. Doerr
1995-2006

Cheryl L. Compton
2006-2012

Chris Kilbride
2012-

Ritenour Board of Education 1846 – 2018

Men and women of the Ritenour community who, since 1846, have worked for the improvement of educational opportunities for children in the Ritenour School District.

DIRECTORS OF BUCK SCHOOL:

John Bray	1846-
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William Heapes	1846-
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Commodore William Walton	1846-
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FIRST TRUSTEES OF RITENOUR SCHOOL:

Josiah Mann	1867-
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Thomas E. Rutherford	1867-
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David H. Therman	1867-
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RITENOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

PAST BOARD MEMBERS

Dates	Last Name	First Name	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Clerk
Prior to 1878	Baldwin	Oscar					
Prior to 1878	Benson	Vinson					
1878-1880	Wise	George					1879-1880
1879-1882	Wise	Marion					
1880-1885	Weber	C. Edward					
Prior to 1879	Ferguson	John	1879				
1880-1883			1881-1883				
1887							
1881-1882	Campbell	P.					
1888-1889							
1882	Thomas	Edwin					
1886-1891							
1883-1884	Woolfolk	J.	1883-1884				
1887-1890			1887-1890				
1884-1887	Wise, Jr.	George	1884-1886				
1890-1898			1890				
1884-1885	Brackenridge	John					1884-1885
1885-1888	Boden	John					
1890-1891							
1885-1886	Condell	Joseph					
1889-1900	DeHart	Lewis	1891-1899				
1891	Klein	Jacob					
1898-1908							
1891-1899	Daves	Edward					
1891-1894	Kattman	John					

Dates	Last Name	First Name	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Clerk
1899	Love	William					
1900-1903	Wagner	Jacob					
1900-1909	Campbell	Clarence	1900-1907				
1903-1909	Miller	A.			1907		
1907-1912	Jones	Thomas	1908-1912			1907-1908	
1907-1913	Ruehmann	Marcus		1908-1913			
1907-1908	Pomeroy	Samuel					
1908-1914	Carter	John		1913-1914			
1908-1909	Felty	Guy				1908	
1908-1913	Williams	W.	1912-1913		1908-1912		
1909-1911	Etherington	Thomas					
1910-1913	McKay	Edward			1912-1913	1910-1911	
1912-1918	Baldwin	Percy	1916	1914-1916			
1912-1913	Morath	Oscar				1912-1913	
1913-1916	Adams	John				1913-1915	
1913-1916	Howe	William					
1914-1917	Reinemer	Conrad					
1914-1917	Wiese	August	1914-1916	1914			
1914-1916	Robertson	James					
1915	Jacobs	Louis					
1915-1916	Ringgen	George			1915-1916		
1916-1925	Lane	Harold				1916-1925	
1916	Robinson	W.	1916				
1916-1921	Wurdack	Ernest		1916-1921			
1917-1919	Goodin	O.			1917-1919		

Dates	Last Name	First Name	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Clerk
1917-1926	Bender	F.	1917-1925				
1917-1920	Culver	John					
1918-1924	Fitzgerald	Charles		1921-1922			
1919-1926	Devine	Grover	1926	1924-1925	1919-1924		
1920-1922	Wind	Harry					
1921-1924	Engel	L. R.		1922-1924		1930	
1927-1933							
1922-1934	Jost	E. May			1925-1934		
1924-1927	Moore	Thomas		1926			
1924-1930	Smith	David	1926-1929	1926			
1925-1931	Brand	Frederick		1930		1926-1929	
1926-1932	Umstatt	Allen		1931			
1926-1932	McAdoo	W.	1930-1931	1927-1929			
1930-1933	Powers	H.	1932				
1931-1972	Wyland	Edward		1941-1949		1932-1935	
						1939-1941	
						1949-1972	
1931-1934	Lindsay	Anna		1932-1934			
1932-1950	McAllister	George	1933-1934 1940-1950	1939-1940			
1932-1939	Buder	Hugo	1934-1939				
1933-1949	Lang	Henry		1934-1935		1935-1939	
						1941-1949	
1934-1946	Spies	Helen					
1934-1950	Kratz	Charles	1939	1935-1939			

Dates	Last Name	First Name	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Clerk
1939-1950	Gilliam	V.		1940-1941			
1941	Burneson	John					
1941-1947	Kaullen	Dr. P.					
1946-1966	Kuhn	Marvin	1950-1954	1950			
1949-1956	Disharoon	Woodford					
1950-1951	McCracken	Thomas					
1950-1955	Knoche	Raymond					
1950-1959	Kemper	Walter	1954-1959	1950-1954			
1951-1958	Walther	Dr. Roy		1954-1957			
1953-1970	Peterson	J.W.	1959-1967	1957-1959			
1956-1967	Billington	James					
1958-1968	Abram	William		1959-1965	1967-1968		
1959-1970	Bernard	H. D.	1967-1970	1965-1967			
1966-1973	Paton	James	1970-1973	1968-1970			
1967-1981	English	Ralph	1975-1977	1973-1975			
1968-1977	Etherington	John	1973-1975	1970-1973			
1970-1973	Katsev	Dr. Bob					
1970-1995	Kuo	Larry	1977-1979	1975-1977			
			1988-1989	1985-1988			
1972-1981	Kuhlmann	Fran	1979-1981	1977-1979			
1973-1976	Pappas	James					
1973-1994	Jennewein	Rosemary	1981-1983	1979-1981	1990-1991		
1976-1982	Bell	David		1981-1982			
1977-1980	Pappas	James					
1980-1986	Holland	Clarue	1983-1985	1982-1983			

Dates	Last Name	First Name	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Clerk
1981-2002	Gaines	Carol	1985-1988	1983-1985 1996-1998			
1981-1984	Sienkiewicz	David					
1982-1985	Meredith	Susan					
1984-1989	Waggoner	Edward	1989-1990	1988-1989			
1985-1994	Vorst	Carl	1990-1993	1989-1990			
1986-1989	Meredith	Susan					
1989-2013	Albin, III	Dr. George	1993-1995	1991-1993 2004-2006			
1990-2003	Rohman	Michael	1996-1999	1993-1996			
1993-1996	Getz	Margaret	1995-1996				
1994-1997	Schaflietzel	Gail					
1994-1997	West	Beverly					
1995-1998	Stickel	Dr. Eugene					
1996-Current	Bell Greco	Ruth	1999-2002	1998-2000			
1997-2000	Getz	Margaret					
1997-2003	Kellum	Arthur	2002-2003	2000-2002			
1998-2004	Schilling	Randall		2003-2004			
2000-2012; 2013-Current	Thomas	Dr. Bradley	2003-2007; 2015-2018	2002-2003			
2002-2011	Kuo	Kathy					
2003-2016	Young	Bob	2007-2010	2006-2007; 2013-2016			
2003-2016	Stein	Gary	2013-2015	2010-2013			
2004-2018	Drennan	Tom	2010-2013	2007-2010; 2016-2017			
2011-2014	Aitken	Michael					
2012-2015	Dang-Williams	Dr. Thao					

Dates	Last Name	First Name	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Clerk
2014-Current	Degardin	Penny					
2015-2016	Amerson	Selena					
2016-Current	Lohnes	Jennifer	2018-Current	2017-2018			
2016-Current	Albin-Wilson	Dr. M. Stacey		2018-Current			
2016-Current	Glover-Jones	Lisa					
2018-Current	Lewis, Jr.	Orlando					