

G. A. R.
Memorial School

West Wyoming, Penna.



**Dedicated to the Youth of
West Wyoming Borough and to the
Grand Army of the Republic.**

Dedicatory Exercises, Tuesday, Feb. 22, 1927

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West Wyoming High School, Wyoming Pa.



This general view of the G. A. R. Memorial, Building Number Two, emphasizes the ideals which the school government has in mind. Present demands are supplied, but the importance of building with an eye to the future is indicated in the outline which provides easily for such additions as may become necessary.

A DISTANT VIEW OF POPULAR EDUCATION



As far back as 1820 there is mention of the old school building within whose simple walls were taught the fundamentals of education, and from whose essentials of rudimentary teaching a more enlightened visualization of opportunity and progress was obtained by large numbers of the residents of West Wyoming Borough throughout the long period of its service. Many of them still survive.

William T. Blair in "The Michael Shoemaker Book," a history of the Shoemaker family whose members have traditional association with the Wyomings, gives this paragraph in reference to the rude structure:

"The earliest reference to a school, at what is now West Wyoming, is discovered by the writer in an item of the day book of Jacob I. Shoemaker under date of March 14, 1820. It appears that on that date he had paid some person eighteen cents for cutting a load of wood near the 'the school house.' This school house was doubtless on the same site as the old school house now (1919) standing on the grounds of the West Wyoming High School. February 4, 1828, Samuel Shoemaker conveyed to John Johnsten 'in trust for school purposes one-eighth of an acre of land for a school district to be formed of part of the upper school district in said Kingston.' From this deed it appears that the whole of New Troy (the early name of Wyoming) was at that time known as the upper school district of Kingston. There were undoubtedly two schools in what was known as New Troy or New Troy and Troy Corners. One of these stood on the site of the Laycock (later Wheeler Hotel) building at what is now the corner of Eighth Street and Wyoming

Avenue, Wyoming. In April, 1801, Joseph Swetland and others petitioned the court for appointment of viewers to lay out a road to begin at or near the school house standing on the road which leads from Benjamin Carpenter's, Esq., to the main road in Kingston, and from the said school house, on a straight line, to the river.

"This school house apparently stood at the corner of Eighth Street and Wyoming Avenue until 1813-1814, when Lot Breese had built a tavern on the corner and had removed the school house to what was later known as the School House Lot, immediately above the house on the Steuben Jenkins' homestead."

A view of the picture here given of the oldest school house known to a present living generation affords contrast with the new G. A. R. School House, and from that contrast may be gained an idea of how far popular education has advanced and how much it has amplified the resources which are freely offered the children of today. Men and women at present residents of West Wyoming received their earliest training in the old school house. It is interesting to note that the land originally deeded for a period of ninety-nine years was turned over to the district on perpetual lease twenty years ago by J. L. Shoemaker and other Shoemaker heirs, in order to permit release of the mineral rights.

Until the summer of 1926 the crude old structure served its purposes, affording often the meeting place for the citizens when engaged in matters of mutual concern to the community. A storm in the last-mentioned year destroyed the building for further use and it was razed on orders of the school district.

Early teachers of the West Wyoming School, long known as the Shoemaker District School, included Mr. Leonard in 1831, Manuel Lewis Pestana in 1834, I. H. Baldwin in 1837, Abel Marcy in 1845, Horace Armstrong, Isaac Shoemaker Phillips, 1847-1854, Mary Jane Durland, William P. Mathers and Walter Bodle, in the Civil War period. Three of the teachers had the honor later of serving as superintendent of Luzerne County Schools, these being Abel Marcy, elected in 1860 and 1863; Horace Armstrong, elected in 1866 and 1869; and Frank P. Hopper, elected in 1899 and continued in service for twenty-five years.

In 1853 when Isaac Shoemaker Phillips taught the school it

is indicated that he was paid a dollar a day for his services. Patrons of the school included: George Alicourt, Charles Barney, Philo Bower, M. C. Bunn, Mrs. Brees, Davis Bryan, C. B. Caswell, M. Connor, Joseph Davidson, Daniel Detrick, William Durland, E. Dymond, Sheperd Goodwin, William Hartsell, Mr. Hess, John Johnsten, John Jackson, Stephen Lawrence, William McCluskey, William McAllister, Valentine Minegar, Margaret Mitchell, Anna Phillips, E. Parrish, William Parrish, P. Randall, P. Rexford, William Sax, Emily Shafer, Isaac C. Shoemaker, William S. Shoemaker, Joseph Spencer, Holden Tripp and Daniel VanScoy.

In 1899 the Borough of Wyoming was divided and the Borough of West Wyoming was established. This brought about the organization of the new School District of West Wyoming. Professor W. H. Hench was delegated to take charge of the first school, with four teachers to assist. In June, 1901, the first graduates were given diplomas.



MEMBERS OF WEST WYOMING FACULTY



Left to right, third row—Rena Cotter, Viola Shiber, Mary Yetter, Eleanor Meier, Sara Dunn. Left to right, second row—Elizabeth Baur, Lydia Pollock, Cleo Sharpe, Prof. W. E. Roberts, Marion Reed, Ruth Carbaugh. Left to right, first row—Margaret Dunn, Jeanne Fox, Pauline Hassler, Alma Thomas, Luree Ackerley.

Borough Incorporated 28 Years Ago.



West Wyoming was incorporated as a Borough and School District in 1899. At that time there were five class rooms in the District. In 1907, four more rooms were added to the Number One Building, and in 1922 the Portable Building was built with two rooms. In ¹⁹²⁴1826 the old school building was damaged beyond repair and was razed with a loss of one class room. The new Number Two Building, with six rooms, gives the District a total of sixteen class rooms.



WEST WYOMING'S FIRST SCHOOL BOARD



The first school board to serve West Wyoming consisted of the following persons:

D. D. Durland,	President.
C. H. Wilner,	Secretary.
W. J. Fowler,	Treasurer.
H. T. Gregory,	J. G. Hunlock

George Arkinson

Roll of the Faculty:

High School: W. L. Roberts, Principal. Margaret Dunn.

Grade Teachers: Ruth Carbaugh, Elizabeth Baur, Rena Cotter, Viola Shiver, Cleo Sharpe, Marion Reid, Lyda Pollock, Eleanor Meler, Alma Thomas, Pauline Hassler, Luree Acklery, Janne Fox, Sarah Dunn, Mary Yetter.

Building Contractors:

Martin L. Rother.....	General Contractor
American Heating Co.....	Heating Contractor
James A. Redington.....	Plumbing Contractor
Gunster & Messersmith.....	Electrical Contractor
R. A. Fife Corporation.....	Seating Contractor

Pupils in Our Schools:

Children of school age (6 to 16 years) in West Wyoming Borough on September 1, 1926, numbered 696.

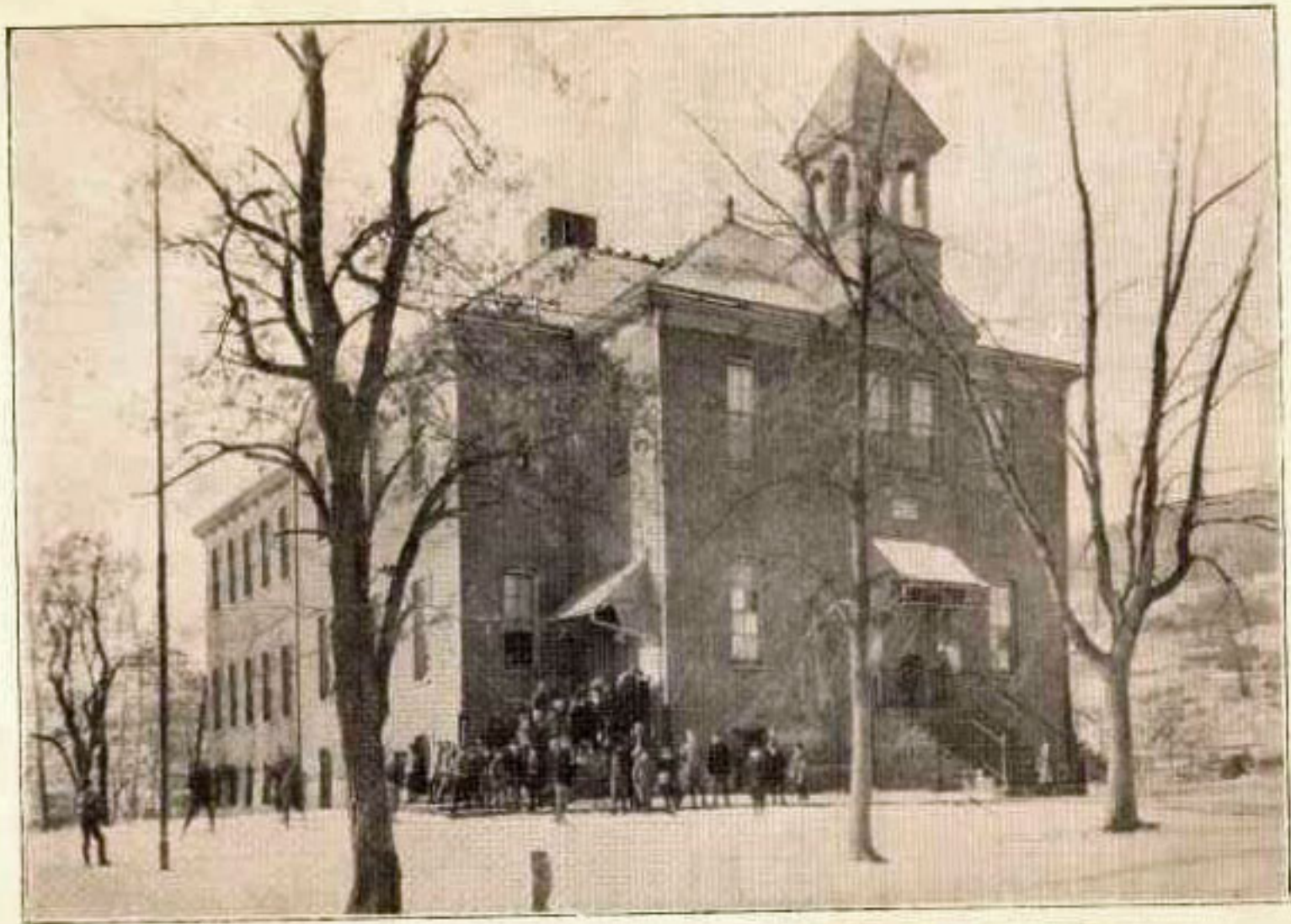
Facts of Interest:



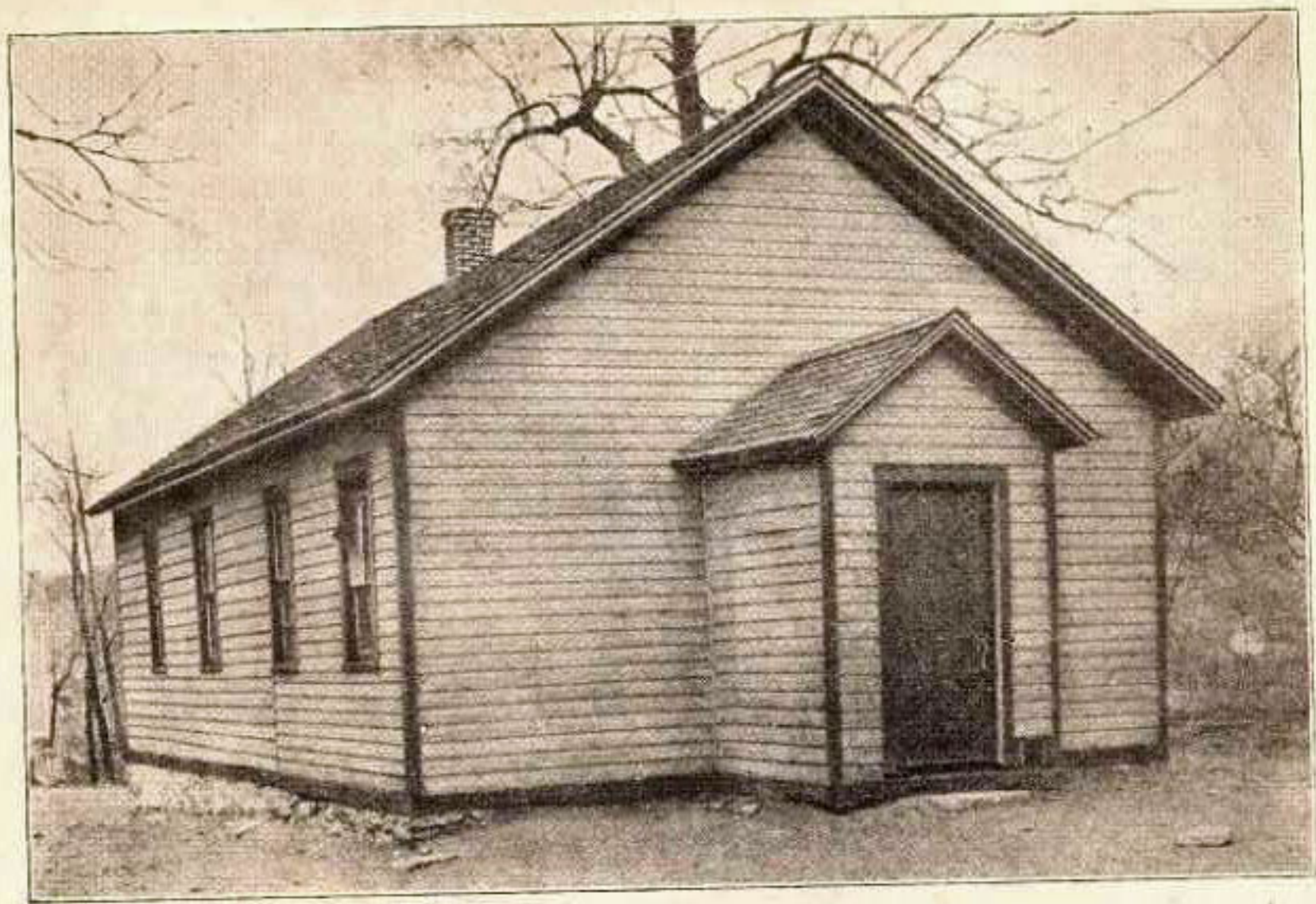
Widely varied are the costs to the taxpayers in their relation with the schools. West Wyoming Borough, in this regard, holds an envied position among all districts of its kind, the charge to the people being one of the lowest shown in the compendium of expenditures for all municipalities of Luzerne County.

There is very little bonded indebtedness here and out of that fact may be made some amazing comparisons. Despite the erection of a new school, with its heavy outlay of current funds, the tax cost on each pupil in the year 1926, as accredited by the Luzerne County Taxpayers' Association, was only \$67.49. This is far below the average cost in school districts of the same class. For instance, Warrior Run shows a per capita cost of \$101.51, although in the year this community spent almost three times what was expended by Warrior Run on improvements.

The actual running expenses of the schools in West Wyoming average only \$40.93 for each pupil, compared with Warrior Run's \$84.57. The tax charge per pupil in West Wyoming Borough is third lowest in the entire roster of similarly classed school districts, regardless of the fact that West Wyoming is one of the very few in the class that has been making additions to equipment. The only places showing a lower expense are Black



Erected originally in 1888 with only four class rooms this structure was increased to eight rooms in 1907. However, it antedates the promulgation of the State Code on school buildings and it is the intention of the School Board to modernize it within the next few years.



This, the first school house erected in West Wyoming, typifies the meagre assets of the community a little more than a hundred years ago. A storm during the year 1926 destroyed the old building and the site was later cleared by order of the school board.



There is no effort to satisfy the appeal for beauty in the portable school building. It is a matter of direct utility with the added feature of saving the money of the taxpayer. The astonishing low cost is indicated in the fact that \$2,908.32 has afforded class accommodations for children numbering between eighty and one hundred.